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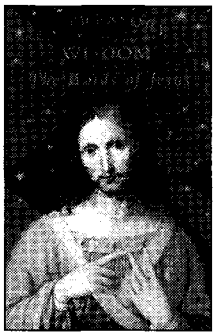

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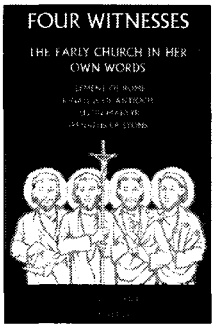

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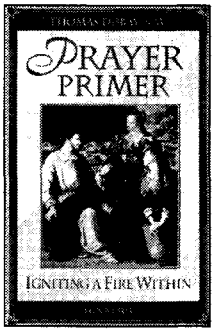

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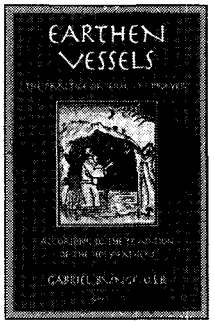

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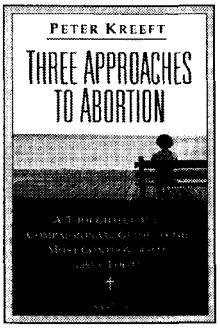

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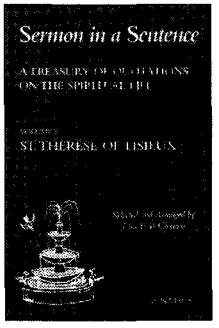

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Catholic Doctrine and Religious Freedom

Avery Cardinal Dulles claims that on the question of religious freedom the difference between the nineteenth-century popes and the Second Vatican Council concerns means only ("Religious Freedom: Innovation and Development," December 2001). The popes wanted a Catholic State whereas the Second Vatican Council merely sought State permission to "carry on [the Church's] mission unimpeded." A few paragraphs later Cardinal Dulles laments that "the greatest threat to religion, in my estimation, is the kind of secularism that would exclude religion from the public forum and that treats churches as purely private institutions that have no rightful influence on legislation, public policy, and other dimensions of public life."

But by following the strategy of the Second Vatican Council this outcome is unavoidable. Pluralist society is implacably secular because its very reason for being is to achieve social peace by suppressing any serious discussion of foundational questions. Religion represents such absolutes and is seen by pluralists as particularly dangerous. Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, and Pius XI all knew that democratic pluralism is incompatible with Catholicism.

As Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre clearly understood, Vatican II represented the surrender of the Catholic Church to modernism. At its heart modernism represents the desire to be well thought of by the movers and shakers of the world. This is a temptation from which Princes of the Church are not immune.

Pluralists, of course, find the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on religious freedom just fine, because then the Church no longer threatens the hegemony of secularism. Public life in America is now lived as if atheism were true. In suppressing the ideal of a Catholic state, Vatican II has betrayed Catholic teaching and has made the most cruel mockery of thousands of martyrs who died for the faith. Those martyrs did not die for the right to practice their religion in a pluralist setting, but for the truth and exclusivity of the Catholic faith.

Robert L. Phillips
Professor of Philosophy
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Connecticut

Avery Cardinal Dulles argues that the right recognized by Vatican II to act according to religious convictions may not disturb "just public order," and that Bishop Emile De Smedt denied that *Dignitatis Humanae* affirmed any right to error. The State must avoid coercion, but not necessarily if religious freedom is being misused to disturb public peace or undermine public morality.

Now *Dignitatis Humanae* in its prologue refers to the moral duty of all people to enter the Church. Therefore, in a country where the great majority are Catholic and the State has officially recognized the true religion, as Pope Leo XIII said must be done, is not the Catholic faith part of public morality? Therefore, might not the State legitimately prevent the public propagation of non-Catholic religion as an offense against public morality? This was the law according to article six of the *Fuero de los Espanoles*, specifically mentioned by the Concordat between the Holy See and Spain in 1953. Article six declared Catholicism the religion of Spain, tolerated the private practice of other religions, and prohibited the public propagation of non-Catholic religion. Would Cardinal Dulles consider this

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law compatible with *Dignitatis Humanae*'s restriction of religious freedom by public morality?

Brother Ansgar Santogrossi, OSB
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Mt. Angel Seminary
St. Benedict, Oregon

Avery Cardinal Dulles replies:
Professor Phillips, like Marcel Lefebvre and others, interprets Vatican II as if it had endorsed religious pluralism and secularism. On the contrary, the Council taught that the "one true religion subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church" and denied that people were morally free to propagate any doctrine contrary to that faith (even though the State might not have the authority to prevent them from doing so). Prof. Phillips also misreads me as saying that the Church must seek permission from the State to carry on her mission. That is a God-given right that no one can take from the Church.

Brother Santogrossi is probing the limits of what Vatican II meant by public morality. While arguing that the State has the right and duty to prevent the propagation of any religion that undermines "just public order," the Council did not specify exactly what public order involves. Could one argue, as Br. Santogrossi does, that the Catholic faith itself may be part of public morality, so that the State could prevent the propagation of any other religion as an offense against public order? That view would, I think, effectively negate what Vatican II lays down as the right of non-Catholic religious bodies "not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith" unless they abuse that right in certain specific ways. The Council insisted that even where some one religion is established by law, "the right of all citizens and religious communities to religious freedom must at the same time be recognized and upheld." It would be difficult to reconcile these statements with the Spanish Concordat described by Br. Santogrossi.

Force and Violence

J. Bottom's essay "What Violence Is For" (December 2001) accurately portrays some of the basic theses of René Girard's "anthropology of the Cross," but it misses other crucial ones and thus misapplies Girard's work in interpreting recent events. The primary theses that Mr. Bottum has missed involve the role of secularity in shaping the history of the "Christian" West. Mr. Bottum thus portrays too radical a distinction between the West and its Islamic cultural counterparts in a way that suggests the superiority of the former over the latter.

When Girard first argued for the superior revelatory power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Part 2 of *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, he immediately followed it with an analysis that did not in a like manner argue for the superiority of "Christian" culture. The third chapter in that second part of *Things Hidden* is entitled "The Sacrificial Reading [of the Gospel] and Historical Christianity," in which Girard traces some of the ways in which historical Christianity has been just as violent as alternative worldviews, if not more so, because it has lapsed into sacrificial readings of the gospel. Because we have secularized our forms of violence under the auspices of human institutions and ideologies—i.e., we have omitted the theological justifications for recourse to violence and resorted to secularized forms of transcendence, such as rule of law, democratic freedom, scientific methodology, et al.—we tend toward seeing other people's sacred violence as primitive.

Girard's primary example of such hypocrisy was the mythological (according to his elaboration of myth as the perpetrator's justifications for violence) notion of Mutual Assured Destruction of the Cold War arms race that was contemporary with the writing of his book in the late 1970s. He says,

> A truly wonderful sense of the appropriate has guided the inventors of the most terrifying weapons to choose names that evoke ultimate violence in the most effective way: names taken from the direst divinities in Greek mythology, like Titan, Poseidon, and Saturn, the god who devoured his own children. We who sacrifice fabulous resources to fatten the most inhuman form of violence so that it will continue to protect us, and who pass our time in transmitting futile messages from a planet that is risking destruction to planets that are already dead—how can we have the extraordinary hypocrisy to pretend that we do not understand all those people who did such things long before us: those, for example, who made it their practice to throw a single child, or two at the most, into the furnace of a

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certain Moloch in order to ensure the safety of the others?

The last comment points to the irony that ancient religions might even be considered superior to Western Christianity in their use of violence to the extent that they were able in general to be much more economical with it. Isn't the periodic sacrifice of one or two people preferable to the threat of a mutually assured destruction of the entire planet? In more ancient religions, the gods are generally able to effectively justify the right small dose of sacred violence to keep at bay the profane violence (i.e., more random violence of individuals against one another). Since the revelation of the Cross, those cultures and religions in closest proximity to it gradually lose the effectiveness of divine justifications. The gospel works like an anti-sacred-violence virus. Those cultures in prolonged, intimate contact with it gradually lose the effectiveness of their sacred violence to act as an immunity to profane violence. The doses of sacred violence required to contain the profane violence grow larger and larger, reaching the level of nation against nation, genocide, massive pollution, and many other excesses of violence common in our time.

There is one important difference in the West, however, due to its being the closest in proximity to the gospel for the longest time—a difference, that is, related more to historical accident than to innate superiority. Since Girard's thesis is that the gospel of Jesus Christ has inexorably through the ages taken rationales for violence away from us by revealing the gods who demand violence as idols, the West has finally reached the point of secularity, the point at which the divine justifications drop away altogether. We continue to claim transcendent justifications for our violence through such instruments as the Constitution or the global market. But these are not seen as gods, so we have difficulty understanding cultures that rebel against secularity and continue to maintain religious justification for their violence.

Is this a significant difference in terms of tending to curb violence? As Girard says, it is a far from simple matter. Has the West shown signs of killing less, or even being less ready to be killed for its "just" causes? I think that the record shows us still to be quite ready and willing on both counts. What has become different is our reasons, secular ones substituted for sacred ones.

In summary, the significance of Girard's work has not been to manifest the superiority of "Christian" culture over other cultures. Rather, it has been to point to the gospel of Jesus Christ as the decisive revelation of human violence as the generating event behind *all* human culture, including those human cultures that consider themselves "Christian." The only true alternative is the culture of God, which, coming to us through the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, is the only nonviolent culture.

I do agree, at least in part, with Mr. Bottum's distinction between "soft" and "hard" pacifism. Soft pacifism does not take seriously enough our human fallenness into cultures of sanctioned violence, whether sacred or secular. On the other hand, perhaps Mr. Bottum's essay is guilty of soft justification of violence, i.e., not taking seriously enough the violence justified in one's own culture in contrast to another. (Mr. Bottum distinguishes between "force" and "violence" so that he can justify our American use of "force" to stop their "violence.") Such softness on one's own violence is generally a good manifestation of why hard pacifism is so hard to come by.

(The Rev.) Paul Nuechterlein
Racine, Wisconsin

I am grateful to J. Bottum for his fascinating essay. His observations on quasi-Christian "soft pacifism" in the wake of September 11 are both just and important. But I disagree with his inclusion of Arundhati Roy and Noam Chomsky in this type of thinking, judging only by the short passages Mr. Bottum cites in his essay. Both passages are concerned neither with appropriating victim status nor with naive and "gooey" calls for tolerance training, but rather with facing squarely the appalling realities that result from America's own brand of violence.

The note sounded by both Chomsky and Roy is admittedly rather shrill, but we must consider that their dissent comes at a time when much of the world seems content with President Bush's view that this attack was simply an attempt by "evildoers" to snuff out "the beacon light of freedom" in the world. Their dissent is important as a balance to such simplifications. I think that Mr. Bottum hears their tone and misses their point because he assumes that the United States represents the "Christian alternative to the sacrificial logic by which mythic cultures are founded."

But is our culture really founded on this alternative? Chomsky brings up the annihilation of the American indigenous population—are we to call what was done to them, in service of the foundational myth known as Manifest Destiny, something radically different from the logic of sacrificial violence? What grounds do we have for labeling that annihilation "force" instead of "violence"? If we put aside Roy's "doppelgänger" ideas, we find that her passage is even more directly relevant in that it is concerned with the ways in which the American version of sacrificial logic is currently devastating natural and cultural goodness throughout the world.

Is this to say that because of the injustices we have committed it was right that some violence came our way? Emphatically no. But it is to acknowledge that the situation is more complex than one pitting envious evildoers against beacons of light. It is to acknowledge what many Americans felt when, with the smoke and dust still darkening the Manhattan

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sky, our leaders told us to quit our mourning and start buying things we did not need. It is not soft pacifism to ask what it is we are defending with war machines that we knew from the outset would take the lives of many innocents.

Neither is it soft pacifism to believe that a commitment to justice in the way we live and affect the world is part of the consideration of whether or not our military operations are to be judged "force" or "violence." Of course it may not even work out to be pacifism at all; we may end up feeling as Chesterton did as he contemplated the coming of World War II: "We now have to defend something nearly indefensible, only because the remedy is even worse than the disease."

Christopher Killheffer
Yale University Library
New Haven, Connecticut

J. Bottum's essay on the meaning of violence comes tantalizingly close to making a clear point, but in my view never quite succeeds. I am with him at the start when he says "we are very bad at symbols these days," and I agree with his conclusion that for non-pacifists, opposing violence with force is the right option. But I'm still not sure how he got from A to B.

Is he trying to say that Islam is, or at least gives rise to, "a mythic culture" that "needs violence for its foundation"? I can see why he might hesitate to say this in so many words, but tiptoeing around the idea and dropping hints about the elephant in the living room is not the way to deal with it. The fact is that millions of mainstream Muslims from a range of classes still practice bloody animal sacrifices annually at the 'Eid-ul-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice. Slaughtering animals (the more the better) and distributing the meat to your family, friends, and those in need is one of the obligations of a faithful Muslim. While human sacrifice per se forms no part of the Islamic religion, it is abundantly clear that most faithful Muslims are familiar with the symbolism of real blood in a way that has died out among most of us in the Christian West.

I got my hopes up when it looked like Mr. Bottum was going to tell us "what violence was originally . . . designed to do." But then he went off into attacks on Chomsky, Hitchens, and Roy, none of whom have a clue about it either, and never got around to the point of violent sacrifice in a mythic culture. I think there are two useful ways to look at the question: 1) from the point of view of those making the sacrifices, and 2) from the point of view of a Christian who believes the sacrifice of Christ has broken "the cycle of violence, sacrifice, and mimetic desire."

From the viewpoint of those who make violent sacrifices, the point is to appease the gods for whom the sacrifices are made. I think Mr. Bottum needlessly confuses the practices of animal sacrifice and human sacrifice. He mentions scapegoats and means thereby humans, but of course the word originally referred to a live goat that was released to bear the sins of the Jewish people into the wilderness. There is a strong element of vengeance in the attacks of September 11 that is absent in animal sacrifice. Nevertheless, Mr. Bottum is right about the symbolic power of sacrifice, whether human or animal, to sustain a culture. I suspect that is one reason why 'Eid-ul-Adha is retained in Islamic practice even today.

From the viewpoint of Christianity, all idol worship, including animal sacrifice, is really devoted to nothing. But demonic spirits can take advantage of those who worship idols and lead them into deeper sin. The only spiritual beings who were really appeased by the deaths on September 11 were the devil and his demons, who continue to inspire those who contemplate similar acts today. The problem that Mr. Bottum correctly identifies is that those such as Chomsky who do not believe in nonmaterial beings literally cannot make sense of the kinds of things done by those who still speak and act in powerful mythic symbols. We all need a crash course in symbolism from Westerners who are still sensitive to the symbolic and the mythical.

One such was Lewis Mumford, the late critic of technology. A few days after the September 11 attacks, I bought an old copy of his *The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power* at a used book sale. Mumford, writing in 1967, assailed the symbolism of gigantism and indifference to the human scale that he saw in a number of contemporary works of architecture. In particular, he held three examples up as special recipients of his ire, and even included photographs. One was some forgettable office building shaped like a spaceship, but the other two were more familiar: the Pentagon and the World Trade Center twin towers. I don't think Osama bin Laden is a fan of Mumford's, but both know their symbols. And the rest of us had better start learning fast.

Karl D. Stephan
San Marcos, Texas

Anti-Semitism and Earplugs

Regarding Michael Linton's review of my *Passion* ("Passion Stomp," December 2001): I will not dignify his anti-Semitic comments ("Golijov diminishes Jewish culpability in Jesus' death") with an answer. For that you may refer to Pope John XXIII. Nor will I respond to his Taliban-like comments ("By having sopranos and altos sing Jesus' words, Golijov makes the Son of God weirdly androgynous"). I just want to correct an untrue statement by Professor Linton: the Boston Symphony players brought earplugs only to the first rehearsal. They took them out for the remaining ones, as well as the performances. Furthermore, contrary to Prof. Linton's statement, I believe that every one of the BSO players came to tell me how moved they were and how much they loved playing this piece.

Osvaldo Golijov
Worcester, Massachusetts

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Michael Linton replies:
Mr. Golijov's accusation of bigotry is serious and deserves a serious answer.

Although now recognized as sophisticated and subtle, the Gospel of Mark is unambiguous in at least one aspect. Jesus stands in stark—and ironic—contrast to the temple priesthood. This theme is introduced in Mark 1:22b and continues through the book, reaching its climax in 14:63ff. where the high priest rends his robes and the whole Sanhedrin beats Jesus, demanding his death. Within this large design, the violence of the crucifixion and the temple priesthood's highly active part in it are highlighted by smaller touches characterized by ironic reversals: the loyal Peter cowardly denies Jesus, and Joseph of Arimathea—the Sanhedrin member—bravely claims him; the Jewish high priest pronounces Jesus blasphemous and worthy of death, while the Roman centurion supervises the execution and proclaims Jesus the "Son of God."

Most Christian scholars would agree that the Gospels are midrashes upon the historic events of Jesus' life, midrashes that clarify Jesus' position as promised Messiah and eschatological Lord. A musical setting of a Gospel story is a midrash upon a midrash. Passion settings such as Bach's and Penderecki's are sophisticated commentaries on and clarifications of the Gospel stories, their positions in the Christian canon, and their roles within the lives of continuing worshiping communities.

Instead of illuminating Mark's story, Golijov's midrash distorts it. The Passion According to St. Mark disappears under the Passion According to Golijov. My objection here is no more anti-Semitic than was my objection to a similarly troublesome attitude to the text in the Crystal Cathedral's passion play (FT, June/July 1997). Whereas the text of that 1997 Garden Grove passion sought to dilute the theological notion of sin (and edited it out of the Lord's Prayer), Golijov diffuses the high irony of the story by excising the single-minded meanness of the temple cabal. In one way Mr. Golijov is exactly right. It is his passion. That's one of its problems.

For Christians it's Jesus' Passion. Or as it's called in the liturgy, "The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Mark." Particularly for evangelical Protestants—but for many other Christians too—the Scriptures are not something that we interpret and adjust, conforming the documents with whatever passes for present realities or suits particular sensitivities, either individual or cultural. We seek to conform our lives to the Scriptures, not the Scriptures to our lives. And the Scriptures have that authority because through them we know Jesus who is our Lord. Mr. Golijov can hardly be surprised if people for whom this text—in all its details—is so important find his understanding shallow and his editing problematic.

My guess is that Mr. Golijov views the text as anti-Semitic and thus purged it of what he thought was objectionable content. If he thinks so, he misreads it. The conflict in the text is between Jews, not against Jews. My full passage which Mr. Golijov characterizes as anti-Semitic is "Golijov diminishes Jewish culpability in Jesus' death by editing out of Mark's text most passages that present Jewish officialdom in a less than benign light." It came in the context of addressing the apparent oddity of a Jew composing a setting of the Passion—something that was widely noted in the press and about which Mr. Golijov had commented. Perhaps I should have put "officialdom" earlier in my sentence. But writing " . . . diminishes Jewish officialdom's culpability" seemed unnecessarily lumpy, and blame for the miscarriage of justice described in the text could hardly be placed against all the Jews or the Jews alone. The women in the story—all Jewish—were not only powerless to stop the process but apparently faithful supporters of Jesus throughout it. It was a Roman who pronounced sentence and other Gentiles who did the dirty work. I thought all that was clear.

But of course it isn't. Christians themselves have misused the accounts, and in the wake of the Holocaust the almost visceral reaction of some Jews to the New Testament stories is certainly understandable. I regret that Mr. Golijov took my comments as he did. But Mr. Golijov should both understand the importance of the unadorned Scriptures for evangelicals and remember evangelicals' historic philo-Semitism. Not only do we worship a Jew as God, but evangelicals are sometimes even stronger supporters of Israel than are some Israelis themselves. The anti-Semitic label is unwarranted.

Instead of name calling, I wish that Mr. Golijov had taken the opportunity to explain matters such as his editing decisions, why he chose to present Jesus as a symbol instead of a person, and perhaps what he expected the reactions of Christians to be to his work.

On the comparatively trivial matter of who wore earplugs when, I stand by my sources.

The Churches and the Civil War

In George McKenna's review of *While God Is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (December 2001), he neglects to lay the least bit of blame for the Civil War on the heightened sense of self-righteousness instilled in both the North and the South by their respective churches. My own researches into the war have led me to conclude that the churches promoted secession vigorously, and that the war's origin, intensity, and duration could have been avoided or reduced had the churches not added their infernal heat to the flames. (For references concerning my assertion please consult "The Civil War, Slavery, and the Bible," located at the following website: http://www.infidels.

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org/library/modern/ed_babinski/experience.html#humanity.)

Edward T. Babinski
Greenville, South Carolina

George McKenna replies:
Churches—infernal heat? Mr. Babinski seem to have an ax to grind. I can only pray that it does not corrupt his research. In any case, it is hard to see how the churches could have been expected to remain silent about the issue that produced the war. In his 1858 debates with Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln called slavery the most serious moral issue of his time. Douglas, in trying to declare it off-limits for political debate, called it a "religious" issue. They were both right. Whenever moral and religious issues are debated, churches must get involved. It goes with the territory.

Abortion and the Rule of Law

The item on abortion and reproductive health care in While We're At It (December 2001) is factually incorrect and misrepresents the position of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy (CRLP).

The piece, quoting Brigham Young law professor Richard Wilkins, maligns CRLP by charging that "the strategy demonstrates 'CRLP's contempt for the American political system.'" As a legal organization, CRLP's mission is to establish and protect the rule of law by advancing women's reproductive rights in the U.S. and around the world, whether at the UN, with governments, or in the courts.

More troubling is the rest of the quote by Prof. Wilkins. His statement is riddled with errors. Asserting that CRLP's "contempt" extends to "a disregard for more general notions of national sovereignty and democratic self-determination" is just plain wrong. Groups across the political spectrum are working to create customary international law through the UN's processes. The U.S. Supreme Court has recognized since the early nineteenth century that customary international law is a legitimate part of American law. Moreover, it is generally accepted that Congress can set aside customary international law by statute and thereby make it unenforceable in U.S. courts—thus, there is a powerful democratic "check" on the UN process. But Congress has never enacted such a law.

Far from imposing one viewpoint on abortion, or "bypassing political accountabililty," all UN documents recognize that abortion is included in the definition of reproductive health, but only to the extent that it is legal in individual nations. In contrast, the "Mexico City policy," which the piece explains as "forbid[ding] the use of U.S. funds for overseas groups that promote or perform abortions," in fact prohibits the use of these groups' own funds, and imposes the viewpoint of a minority of the population of the U.S. on other sovereign nations, regardless of their own established laws on the issue.

These contortions distort the way the UN addresses reproductive health services and the efforts of the reproductive rights community, and have resulted in a column that is a disservice to the readers of First Things.

Janet Benshoof
President
Center for Reproductive Law and Policy
New York, New York

Richard Wilkins replies:
Ms. Benshoof asserts that my comments in the December 2001 issue of First Things are "riddled with errors." Ms. Benshoof should be quite careful before making such a claim.

"ALL MEN BY NATURE DESIRE TO KNOW."
—Aristotle

Does the very nature of music elevate Mozart's work above that of Schönberg?

Does time dilate as one approaches the speed of light?

$e^{i\pi} = -1$?

Is happiness found in the life of virtue or in the life of pleasure?

The human soul: mortal, immortal, or imagined?

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Anika Rahman, Director of the International Program for CRLP, claimed, in a letter to the *Washington Times* (August 31, 2001), that "our lawsuit does not assert that the right to abortion is a principle of international customary law." In her letter, Ms. Benshoof admits what her colleague denied. See paragraph 89 of the Center's lawsuit, which alleges that "CRLP advocates" for "interpretations of existing treaties and other international human rights agreements that favor protection of reproductive rights, including abortion, as internationally recognized human rights." It takes exceptional legal training, to say the least, to explain any distinction between a "customary international law" and an "internationally recognized human right."

Ms. Benshoof claims that the CRLP's attempts to enforce "customary international law" are consistent with the American legal system and that, in any event, UN-created norms respect the abortion policy of individual states. These claims warrant a three-point reply.

First, as Ms. Benshoof notes, the Supreme Court *has* decreed that customary international law is enforceable in U.S. Courts. That is precisely why abortion advocates, like the CRLP, are moving into the international law arena to set aside political and legal decisions (like the Mexico City policy) adopted within the United States. Viewed in this context, Ms. Benshoof's invocation of international law indeed shows contempt for the American legal process. Otherwise, why file a lawsuit (invoking purported international law) to set aside a presidential decision?

Second, Ms. Benshoof's assertion that Congress can "set aside" a principle of customary international law is creative but merely hypothetical, and certainly questionable at best—as Ms. Benshoof concedes, this has never actually happened. The real issue, of course, is why Congress should have to "reverse" or "set aside" a principle of law that Congress or the United States Constitution did not create in the first place. That is precisely how the use of international law by Ms. Benshoof and her associates shows such contempt for democracy and sovereignty.

Third, abortion advocates, without any doubt, are attempting to further their agenda by using international meetings that have little if any political oversight by, or democratic accountability to, the electorates of the nations attending those meetings. Such meetings are used, or misused, by the abortion lobbyists to create new "norms" of customary international law—norms that would never be adopted through the democratic processes of most of the attending countries.

Nations such as those in South America whose constitutions specifically protect unborn children are urged at international meetings to endorse broad language calling for "reproductive rights." Of course, during the course of the international meetings, abortion activists deny that "reproductive rights" language includes abortion. (But see the Canadian admission to the contrary—the event that prompted the item in question.) Then, once the "reproductive rights" language is adopted, CRLP and others take that language back to the legal systems of the participating nations and claim (as the CRLP did in its own lawsuit) that such "agreements . . . favor protection of reproductive rights, including abortion, as internationally recognized human rights." This is precisely why abortion advocates expend such vast efforts at international meetings pushing for abortion policies that do in fact seek to subvert the democratic process by foisting an a priori abortion agenda on nations around the world.

The incredible irony is that all of the above takes place, according to Ms. Benshoof, in the name of seeking "to establish and protect the rule of law."

By filing a lawsuit to set aside the Mexico City policy on the basis of "international law" created outside the American political system, the CRLP has demonstrated that it firmly believes that "international law" (which has little if anything to do with the will of the American people or the representatives they elect to govern them) is nevertheless enforceable against the American people and, ultimately, the people of the world. Groups and individuals who indeed wish to "protect the rule of law" should take notice.

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THIS TIME

The Uses of Anger

Damon Linker

I'm angry, and I have been ever since I watched a 767 slam into the North Tower of the World Trade Center while walking to the office on a lovely late-summer morning last September. Sure, like most Americans, I've also experienced shock and profound sadness. But the anger came early, and it's still there—even after the remarkable success of our country's military campaign in Afghanistan. Though its intensity has diminished over the past five months, I suspect that the anger will persist until Osama bin Laden, Mohammed Omar, and every other would-be murderer of Americans is, in the words of President Bush, "brought to justice." By which he means, no less than I do, killed in battle, imprisoned for life, or executed after a lawful but expeditious trial or military tribunal.

The widespread and deep support for our nation's ongoing war against international terrorism convinces me that most Americans share my anger. But such sentiments are not unanimous. Indeed, two prominent groups tell us that we should be ashamed of our rage. For left-wing academics and intellectuals, the problem isn't anger itself so much as its object. They claim we must come to "understand" and even to share the anger of those who wish to destroy us, for their hatred is largely justified. One could say that for the far left, anger is perfectly legitimate, as long as it is directed against the United States.

More serious are the arguments of those who reject anger altogether. While some focus on its potential to inspire a bloody "cycle of violence," the most potent critique of anger is actually made by those less concerned with drawing attention to its negative political consequences. These figures—usually Christian moral philosophers and theologians—argue that the Christian call to righteousness and holiness demands that we transcend the anger we feel when we are intentionally harmed. After all, does Christ not instruct us to "turn the other cheek" and "love our enemies"? Anger might very well be natural, but in this case at least, our nature stands fundamentally opposed to the kind of life we are called to lead by the Church.

There is much to respect in this position. Anger is indeed a powerful emotion that, left unchecked, can do considerable harm to the angry man himself no less than to the objects of his wrath. Nevertheless, we would be wrong to accept the account of anger presupposed by its critics. However much we may admire their motives, the greatest works of both ancient philosophy and Christian civilization give us a much fuller and more nuanced account of anger and its place in a good human life.

Many philosophers have noted that at its most basic level human anger resembles animal behavior. Kick a dog enough times and it will bite; repeatedly steal a cat's food and it will lash out; approach a bear cub in a threatening way and its mother will respond violently. An animal becomes angry when it—or, in the case of the mother bear, its offspring—is directly attacked or threatened with an attack. A human being reacts in much the same way. For both, then, anger is a response to an assault on "one's own."

Yet Plato and Aristotle also recognized that anger is far more complex in human beings than it is in animals. To begin with, because human beings possess highly developed faculties of reason, language, and memory, a man's sense of what is "his" is not limited to himself, his family, or even those with whom he regularly interacts. A man can identify himself with large groups of individuals united by little other than a shared notion of the good. Aristotle believed that such a capacity is limited to communities roughly the size of the ancient Greek city-states (approximately fifty thousand people living in close proximity to each other), but the modern nation-state proves him wrong. Despite their often considerable physical distance from the carnage in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania on September 11, virtually all Americans considered themselves under attack that morning, and for many the instinctive response was anger.

But far more significant than the breathtaking scope of human attachment—indeed, the thing that makes human anger different in kind from its purely animal form—is man's expansive sense of himself. In contrast to animals, a human being's conception of "his own" is not limited to bodily goods. Man is capable of judging himself by ideals of goodness, both individually and collectively. He can become angry with himself for failing to live up to those ideals. And he can be driven to anger by another's refusal to recognize his innate dignity as a being who possesses this moral potential. Such anger can be provoked by a glance—think of the bar brawl inspired by a dirty look—or an intricate argument that catalogues a series of indignities. And of course it can be ignited by violence. Yet even when a violent attack is the immediate cause of anger, it is less the act itself than the implicit denial of the victim's dignity that inspires

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the greatest rage. An assault is, first and foremost, an affront to one's sense of self-worth.

The ancient philosophers thus determined that, although anger clearly needs to be moderated by reason, it is not unambiguously destructive. The fact that many of the greatest Christian theologians appear to agree with this evaluation—Aquinas, for example, argues that "the object of anger is good" (*Summa Theologiae*, 2.1.46.2)—has led some to conclude that they were insufficiently attuned to the obvious and contrary message of Scripture.

But such a reading is insufficient. Of course it is true that in the Sermon on the Mount, as in the most otherworldly passages of Paul's Epistles, Christians are told to (in Paul's words) "let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you" (Ephesians 4:31; cf. Colossians 5:8, 1 Timothy 2:8). However, the full Christian teaching on anger is subtler than such passages might lead one to believe. Not only does Paul himself assume the possibility of making crucial moral distinctions when he tells us: "Be angry but do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26); but Christ himself becomes angry on several occasions (Matthew 21:12; Mark 3:5, 11:15; John 2:15) and even describes God the Father, by way of a parable, as responding with anger to human beings who behave unjustly (Matthew 18:34-35). (It should go without saying that this verse conforms quite closely to the numerous chapters of the Old Testament in which God becomes angry.)

At the very least, such passages complicate the somewhat facile denigration of anger heard so often today. Anger—as everyone from Jesus Christ to the wisest philosophers and theologians seem to recognize—is not inherently depraved. It is, rather, a salutary expression of the same natural love for one's own that motivates human beings to assert their God-given rights and dignity against those who would deny them. It is thus also rooted in mankind's innate love of justice—a love that ultimately draws us closer to God.

When anger is allowed to consume the soul—to drive a man or a community beyond the bounds of justice to acts of indiscriminate violence or cruelty—it can certainly be a force for evil in the world. But it need not come to this. As the forceful but measured actions of the United States since September 11 make clear, righteous anger, properly tempered by reason and law, can serve the cause of goodness and justice, and even put a stop to the "cycle of violence." FT

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Opinion

Reinventing Sexual Ethics

Robert Benne

I am reliably informed that there is a Neuhaus' Law to the effect that, where orthodoxy is optional, it will sooner or later be proscribed. There are, of course, exceptions to all such rules, but this one seems to be confirmed by what is happening in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The story is not of interest only to Lutherans. With just a little over five million members, the ELCA is the fourth largest Protestant denomination in the country, following the Southern Baptist Convention (15.8 million), the United Methodist Church (8.3 million), and the Church of God in Christ (5.4 million). Like the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Church, and the United Church of Christ, the ELCA is part of what many still call the Protestant "mainline."

It was not always so. The ELCA is a relatively new thing, formed in 1988 by a merger of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the American Lutheran Church (ALC). Both predecessor bodies kept their distance from the more conservative 2.5 million-member Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), which more than reciprocated their coolness. Fifty and even twenty years ago, historians of American religion commonly referred to Lutheranism as the "sleeping giant" that would one day rouse itself and bring its impressive theological tradition to the rescue of an enervated liberal Protestantism. Perhaps, in ways beyond our capacity to imagine, that will still happen. The experience of the ELCA, however, supplies slight encouragement for that hope. One might even suggest that the ELCA shows every sign of coming down with the disease for which those historians thought Lutheranism might be the cure.

Consider, as a recent piece of evidence, the actions taken by the ELCA's 2001 Churchwide Assembly last August with regard to its moral assessment of homosexuality and homosexual relations. The assembly decided (899-115) to do a "churchwide study on homosexuality, including matters related to the blessing of same-gender relationships and ordination of gay and lesbian people in committed relationships." The action also calls for a final report and plan for implementation to be presented to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

In a related but separate action, the Assembly voted 624-381 to ask the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and the Division of Ministry to "create a specific plan and timeline leading toward a decision concerning the rostering of homosexual persons in committed relationships." That plan is also to be placed before the Churchwide Assembly in 2005. A third action that asked for the initiation of a process leading to a general statement on human sexuality passed by 581-386.

The momentous part of the first two actions is that they may result in a straightforward decision to ordain gays and lesbians in committed relationships and to bless same-sex unions. While it is widely believed that the church bureaucracy solidly supports both innovations, that bureaucracy certainly didn't want to be rushed into a real decision in 2005. After all, the ELCA already has plenty of internal organized resistance on its hands from those incensed about the presumed concessions concerning the office of bishop that the ELCA made in order to establish fellowship with the Episcopal Church.

The ELCA bureaucracy would have preferred to muddle along without any precipitating action for a decade or so until the "crabby old guys" died off. After all, it holds all the cards—a self-perpetuating headquarters ethos that, combined with a quota system for church officers, guarantees "enlightened" thinking, control of the official communication instruments of the church, and the capacity to set agendas and frame questions. The ELCA leaders could afford to wait out the opposition on this issue, anticipating that the practice of "irregular ordinations" and blessing of same-sex unions would outrun and finally overturn traditional teaching. These revisionist practices are already doing just that in some synods of the ELCA. When challenged by conservatives, the violators formally have their wrists slapped while informally they are embraced. The juggernaut is moving.

This assessment may sound a bit cynical, but I have personal experience with the workings of the ELCA on this particular issue. After the storm of protest that greeted the first ELCA attempt at a statement on sexuality during the 1990s, I was asked to serve on a select committee to discuss how the ELCA might engage in "moral deliberation" on issues of sexuality, especially homosexuality. (I was giving a lecture at the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary in St. Louis when the first ELCA study came out. A local newspaper greeted the study with the banner headline:

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"Lutherans Endorse Masturbation!" It was more than a bit embarrassing to be ELCA on that day.)

When I attended the task force's first meeting of about a dozen persons, I quickly found that I was the only one willing to articulate the classical Christian teaching on sexual ethics. Eight or nine of the group were vocal proponents of the homosexual agenda. The other participants—one a bishop—remained silent. After a good deal of fruitless bickering, the group decided that all of us should depart for home grounds to try to develop models for discussion of the issue. We would gather again in several months to see what sort of models we had developed and how they fared.

I held a "Disputation on Homosexuality" at Roanoke College at which I invited Gilbert Meilaender to argue the classic case and Paul Jersild, then of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, to present the revisionist view. We printed up and taped the proceedings. (Interestingly, Meilaender got Jersild to admit that one couldn't support the revisionist agenda on biblical or confessional grounds; one would have to rely on social science and contemporary experience.)

When we gathered again to report on our experiments in "moral deliberation," I was appalled. The other "models" were either unchallenged expositions of the revisionist position or, more commonly, tapes of gays and lesbians "telling their stories" to each other and to other Lutheran pastors and laity. Not one decent representation of the classic Lutheran teaching on sexuality was evident. Theological and biblical reflection was nowhere to be found. Indeed, as is often the case in ELCA deliberations, theology was viewed suspiciously as "hegemonic" in nature and therefore to be treated as but one interest among others. The consensus of the group seemed to be: the issue is settled; let's enlighten the masses who sit in darkness. However, the bureaucrats—leery following the protests over the proposed earlier sexual statement—put something of a brake on that sentiment.

The Meilaender and Jersild essays and tapes got wide exposure in the following ELCA study materials since they were the only theologically articulate pieces the "moral deliberation" models had turned up. Sad to say, though, the study materials that came out of our task force deliberations turned out to be heavily biased toward the revisionist agenda.

There are good reasons to suspect that the study process leading up to 2005 will resemble what I have just described. After all, that first venture took place under a presiding Bishop, George Anderson, who believed in the Lutheran moral tradition on these matters, but whose influence on the latitudinarian draft statement was not much in evidence. The new Bishop, Mark Hanson, from the notably liberal St. Paul Area Synod of the ELCA, has already shown tacit support both for ordaining gays and lesbians in committed relationships and for blessing same-sex unions. The governing Church Council maintains a thoroughly "progressive" posture, as witnessed by its elimination of a reference to the normative status of marriage in a recent Church and Society statement on sexual exploitation. Furthermore, most of the same ELCA executives hold sway now as then, and they will attempt to direct the four-year process in their preferred direction.

The ELCA in general acts as if it has no normative tradition on Christian sexual ethics. Since its creation in 1988, it has been confused about whether the statements on sexual ethics of its predecessor bodies have any real authority. Detached from its history, it tends to view the various perspectives on sexual ethics as equally valid. We just have to find out where the majority of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly comes down, and voila!—we have a new teaching on sexual ethics. Furthermore, it is argued that these revisionist changes are not very important because they are peripheral to the Christian gospel: "Don't we have something more important to argue about?" liberals dismissively argue.

These blithe attitudes are oblivious to the gravity of treating the classic tradition as optional and of viewing the issue itself as one of relative insignificance in Christian life and teaching. These items are peripheral only to Lutherans who want the acceptance of the gospel without the commands of the law. To many within the church the sober warning of Wolfhart Pannenberg sums up their own posture:

> If a church were to let itself be pushed to the point where it ceased to treat homosexual activity as a departure from the biblical norm, and recognized homosexual unions as a personal partnership of love equivalent to marriage, such a church would stand no longer on biblical ground but against the unequivocal witness of Scripture. A church that took this step would cease to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

An acceptance of the revisionist agenda by the ELCA in 2005 would be the last straw for many in a church that has gradually joined the Protestant mainstream and accommodated itself to liberal secular culture. The commitment to "inclusivity" is the only new impulse in the ELCA. Unlike its surface meaning, "inclusivity" has not meant the vigorous evangelization of many sorts of people at home and abroad. Rather, it has meant an interest group liberalism that has led to quotas, identity politics, and factionalism, just as it has in secular society itself. The ELCA has more or less followed the culture on issues of abortion, divorce, and the acceptance of premarital sex and cohabitation. Factionalism, or

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more precisely an aggressive feminism, has prevented it from clearly affirming traditional teachings on any of these issues. "True love waits," the simple slogan of the evangelicals concerning premarital sex, would be far too uncomplicated for the ELCA.

What, then, will happen in 2005 and what will the "losers" do thereafter? As I have already indicated, I believe the ELCA will capitulate to the revisionists, who have momentum and bureaucratic power on their side. Moreover, the militant gay and lesbian lobby has shown itself to be willing to push an agenda that may lead to the loss of one to two million members of the church. Chances are very good that both items—the ordination of homosexuals in committed relationships and the blessing of same-sex unions—will pass.

It is possible that an organized resistance could emerge that would awaken the ordinary laity to what is going on and prevent the revisionists from gaining the two-thirds majority vote they will need in 2005. There is already one organized resistance movement in the ELCA—the WordAlone Network—but that group seems fixated on its rejection of hierarchical authority in the church. It might well fracture if it were to focus on anything else. Perhaps another group will step forward, but that would take leadership that as yet is nowhere in sight.

If the revisionist agenda triumphs in 2005, what will the "losers" do? A small number of clergy will, as one of my Greek Orthodox friends invited me to do, "swim the Bosporus." A larger number—but still fairly small—will go to Rome. A significant number of laity are likely to migrate to evangelical or conservative churches, including the more conservative Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Perhaps the estimate of one to two million persons leaving is too high, at least in the short run. As in most church fractures, those electing to leave are always fewer than predicted. People focus on their local parish and try to ignore what is going on at higher levels of the church.

If the revisionists win in 2005, however, ordinary laity will have a hard time ignoring what will be going on above them. If the ELCA's record on "inclusivity" is a reliable sign of what will happen on homosexual issues, no one will be able to hide. The ELCA has driven "inclusivity" into the ground. Every featured picture in the *Lutheran*, every worship team at every Assembly, every text, every committee, every Sunday School lesson now has to reflect the "official" inclusivity of the ELCA.

I can visualize the future. Three weeks after the 2005 Churchwide Assembly votes in the revisionist agenda, the *Lutheran* will have a cover picture of the blessing of a gay union before a Lutheran church altar. Sunday school materials will depict two mommies or two daddies who are in idyllic committed relationships. Quotas will include required places for gays and lesbians. Seminaries will have a growing homosexual population, as will Lutheran pulpits.

When these changes become widely visible, defections will begin to take place on a massive scale. Much of the laity will simply not tolerate their children being taught what the ELCA will try to teach them. Since many congregations can take their property with them as they withdraw, they will do so.

However, instead of leaving the ELCA (who wants yet another denomination?), a significant group of pastors and congregations will withdraw their benevolence to and cooperation with the ELCA and their synods. They will treat those "higher" expressions of the church as "mere associations in the left-hand Kingdom, not the Church," as one Lutheran theologian put it. In other words, the ELCA as a unified church will come to an end. Traditional Lutheran clergy and laity will seek out congregations that adhere to classical teaching and will refuse to support the ELCA or synods supportive of the ELCA. Revisionist clergy and laity will gather in the congregations that support the ELCA and in synods that move with the ELCA. The ELCA will resemble the Episcopal Church that it has courted so ardently. In due time it may even merge fully with the Episcopal Church—and dwindle further with it into the peripheral irrelevance that liberal Protestantism has made of itself.

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A Better Concept of Freedom

George Weigel

On October 31, 1958, Isaiah Berlin gave his inaugural lecture as Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at Oxford. Entitled "Two Concepts of Liberty," it was, according to Michael Ignatieff, Berlin's authorized biographer, "the most influential lecture he ever delivered." Indeed, one can argue that Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty" was one of the most important political essays of the twentieth century, for it clarified an important element in the prolonged contest between the imperfect democracies of the West and the pluperfect tyranny of the Soviet Union. Moreover, Berlin's essay defended the liberal democratic project in such a way as to reinforce the liberal anti-Communist consensus that historians still associate with men such as President Harry Truman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, and Senators Hubert H. Humphrey and Henry M. Jackson. As things turned out, that consensus held just long enough to ensure that, deepened intellectually and reinforced politically by conservative and neoconservative thinkers and political leaders in the 1970s and 1980s, freedom's cause won out over Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism.

A wide-ranging historian of ideas who had grown up in Riga and Petrograd, Isaiah Berlin had seen firsthand the human and political effects of passionately held ideas. Berlin knew in his bones that ideas are not intellectuals' toys: ideas have consequences, for good and for ill, in what even intellectuals sometimes call "the real world." In "Two Concepts of Liberty," Berlin mounted an extended defense of what he understood to be the liberal idea of freedom against its principal modern political competitors, fascism and communism. At the same time, he raised an alarm against what he regarded as the tendency in social democratic theory to weaken individual freedom in the name of other social goods. As the title of his lecture signals, Berlin's basic intellectual move was to distinguish between "negative liberty" and "positive liberty," and then to defend the former as the only concept of liberty that could be actualized in the "real world" of inevitably conflicting interests, diverse concepts of the good, and competing human projects.

"Negative liberty" for Berlin is freedom *from*: freedom from interference in personal matters, which implies the circumscription of state power within a strong legal framework. As Ignatieff summarizes Berlin's argument, the primary purpose of a liberal political community is to create the public circumstances in which men and women are left alone "to do what they want, provided that their actions [do] not interfere with the liberty of others." "Positive liberty," on the other hand, is freedom *to*: freedom to realize some greater good in history. At the heart of the Fascist and Communist projects, Berlin warned, was a determination to use political power to liberate human beings, whether they liked it or not, for the realization of some higher historical end. That determination, Berlin argued, inevitably leads to repression.

Isaiah Berlin was not a libertarian. Rather, the man who had first worked at the intersection of ideas and power during his World War II service at the British Embassy in Washington was a Russo-English exponent of classic American New Deal liberalism: a liberal who believed that government had an obligation to secure the economic, social, and educational conditions under which people could truly exercise their liberty. Berlin broke with the social-democratic left, though, in

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insisting that liberty, equality, and justice were, are, and always will be in tension.

Berlin was never willing (or perhaps able) to sort out the tensions or define the boundaries between liberty and justice. Still, his insistence that politics is not therapy, his resolute refusal to deny the reality of conflicts among social goods, and his insistence that utopian politics inevitably become coercive politics (and, in the modern world, extraordinarily brutal coercive politics) were all important ideas to defend, in Europe and America, against the coercive utopians of the twentieth century. In this specific sense, Berlin was a champion of pluralism in an age in which too many other political theorists had cast their lot with monisms of one kind or another—monisms, otherwise known as totalitarianisms, of a most lethal sort. A robust pluralism, Berlin suggested, was both an expression of liberty rightly lived and political liberty's surest guarantee.

Isaiah Berlin thus deserves considerable credit for identifying the perversion of liberty that was at the root of the totalitarian project, and for defending a concept of liberty-as-noninterference that, in setting legal limits to coercive state power, has deep resonances in the American political tradition. And yet, forty-four years after "Two Concepts of Liberty," one has to ask whether Berlin's analysis of the problem of freedom is truly adequate.

In a thoughtful assessment of Berlin's achievement ("A Dissent on Isaiah Berlin," *Commentary*, February 1999), Norman Podhoretz has argued that, despite its important contribution in its time, Berlin's essay is at bottom intellectually unsatisfying: it does not propose a principled, but only a pragmatic, defense of pluralism, and it fails to grapple satisfactorily with a problem that Berlin notes but never seriously addresses—the problem of moral relativism. For while Berlin correctly recognized, in Podhoretz's words, "the spinelessness that can develop from the rejection of any absolutes and the correlative failure to develop rock-bottom convictions," his liberal skepticism about the possibility of philosophically defensible "rock-bottom convictions" could not provide an antidote to "spinelessness." The response to the events of September 11, 2001 in at least some of the higher altitudes of the intellectual class in both the United States and Europe illustrates with almost painful clarity the truth of Podhoretz's critique of Berlin on this point. To that diagnosis, I would add another disease to which relativism is susceptible, especially when it encounters the afterburn of New Left thought and politics in the United States: namely, the absolutizing of moral relativism as a kind of constitutionally mandated national political creed.

In the final analysis, though, Berlin's "two concepts" are unsatisfactory because he does not drive the analysis deeply enough, historically or philosophically. Both of his concepts are children of the Enlightenment, and there is virtually no reckoning in his essay with the possibility that pre-Enlightenment thinkers might have some important things to teach us about freedom. Berlin himself concedes that "conceptions of freedom directly derive from what constitutes a self, a person, a man," and goes on to argue that given "enough manipulation of this definition of man . . . freedom can be made to mean whatever the manipulator wishes." But this is to dodge the crucial question, which is precisely the question of the truth about man—the truth about the human person—on which any defense of human freedom with real traction must ultimately rest. Isaiah Berlin's philosophical anthropology, and even his concept of the human person as *homo politicus*, is exceedingly thin. The net result is to reduce freedom to a function of a single human faculty: the will.

Contrary to much conventional wisdom, the identification of freedom with the will is not an Enlightenment innovation. It is rather the product of a great intellectual chasm that opened up in the High Middle Ages. The nature of that fissure can be discerned in what we might call a tale of two monks.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican friar known to the history of theology as the "Angelic Doctor," was born c. 1225 in his family's *castello* near Roccasecca in the Roman Campagna, and died in 1274 at the abbey of Fossanuova, southeast of Rome, en route to the Council of Lyons. His monumental achievement, in such epic works as the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*, was to marry the wisdom of a millennium of Christian philosophy and theology to the "new philosophy" of Aristotle that had been rediscovered in Europe (largely through the mediation of Arabic philosophers) in the early thirteenth century. This intellectual marriage yielded a rich, complex, and (to use the precisely right word a few centuries before its time) deeply *humanistic* vision of the human person, human goods, and human destiny. Embedded in that vision of the human person was a powerful concept of freedom.

According to one of his most eminent contemporary interpreters, the Belgian Dominican Servais Pinckaers, Aquinas' subtle and complex thinking about freedom is best captured in the phrase, *freedom for excellence*. Freedom, for St. Thomas, is a means to human excellence, to human happiness, to the fulfillment of human destiny. Freedom is the capacity to choose wisely and to act well as a matter of habit—or, to use the old-fashioned term, as an outgrowth of *virtue*. Freedom is the means by which, exercising both our reason and our will, we act on the natural longing for truth, for goodness, and for happiness that is built into us as human beings. Freedom is something that grows in us, and the habit of

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living freedom wisely must be developed through education, which among many other things involves the experience of emulating others who live wisely and well. On St. Thomas' view, freedom is in fact the great organizing principle of the moral life—and since the very possibility of a moral life (the capacity to think and choose) is what distinguishes the human person from the rest of the natural world, freedom is the great organizing principle of a life lived in a truly human way. That is, freedom is the human capacity that unifies all our other capacities into an orderly whole, and directs our actions toward the pursuit of happiness and goodness understood in the noblest sense: the union of the human person with the absolute good, who is God.

Thus, as Pinckaers notes, virtue and the virtues are crucial elements of freedom rightly understood, and the journey of a life lived in freedom is a journey of growth in virtue—growth in the ability to choose wisely and well the things that truly make for our happiness and for the common good. It's a bit, Pinckaers says, like learning to play a musical instrument. Anyone can bang away on a piano; but that is to make noise, not music, and it's a barbaric, not humanistic, expression of freedom. At first, learning to play the piano is a matter of some drudgery as we master exercises that seem like a constraint, a burden. But as our mastery grows, we discover a new, richer dimension of freedom: we can play the music we like, we can even create new music on our own. Freedom, in other words, is a matter of gradually acquiring the capacity to choose the good and to do what we choose with perfection.

Law is thus intertwined with freedom. Law can educate us in freedom. Law is not a work of heteronomous (external) imposition but a work of wisdom, and good law facilitates our achievement of the human goods that we instinctively seek because of who we are and what we are meant to be as human beings.

Aquinas was fully aware that human beings can fail, and in fact do evil—often great evil. No exponent of Aristotelian realism like St. Thomas, indeed no one formed by biblical religion as well as ancient philosophical wisdom, could deny this undeniable truth. Yet, even in the face of manifest evil, Thomas insisted that we have within us, and we can develop, a freedom through which we can do things well, rightly, excellently. Evil is not the last word about the human condition, and an awareness of the pervasiveness of evil is not the place to start thinking about freedom, or indeed about political life in general. We are made for excellence. Developed through the four cardinal virtues—prudence (practical wisdom), justice, courage, and temperance (perhaps better styled today, "self-command")—freedom is the method by which we become the kind of people our noblest instincts incline us to be: the kind of people who can, among other possibilities, build free and virtuous societies in which the rights of all are acknowledged, respected, and protected in law. It was not for nothing that John Courtney Murray, the great American Catholic public philosopher of freedom, called Thomas Aquinas "the first Whig."

Our second monk, William of Ockham, was born in England about a dozen years after Aquinas' death, joined the Franciscans, was educated and later taught at Oxford, and died in 1347 in Munich after a life of considerable turbulence, both intellectual and ecclesiastical. Even those who have never studied philosophy will recognize his name as the author of "Ockham's Razor"—the principle (still used in the sciences as well as in philosophy) that, as a general rule, the simpler of two explanations should be preferred. Professional philosophers consider him the chief exponent of "nominalism," a powerful late-medieval philosophical movement which denied that universal concepts and principles exist in reality—they exist only in our minds. To take an obvious and critical example, there is for nominalists no such thing per se as "human nature." "Human nature" is simply a description, a name (hence "nominalism") we give to our experience of common features among human beings. The only things that exist are particulars.

Often presented as a crucial moment in the history of epistemology, nominalism also had a tremendous influence on moral theology. And because politics, as Aristotle taught, is an extension of ethics, nominalism's impact on moral theology eventually had a profound influence on political theory. If, to return to that obvious and critical example, there is no "human nature," then there are no universal moral principles that can be "read" from human nature. Morality, on a nominalist view, is simply law and obligation, and that law is always external to the human person. Law, in other words, is always coercion—divine law and human law, God's coercion of us and our coercion of each other.

The implications of Ockham's nominalism for the moral life and for politics are not hard to tease out of this brief sketch of his basic philosophical position. In his history of medieval philosophy, Josef Pieper writes that, with Ockham, "extremely dangerous processes were being set in motion, and many a future trouble was preparing." Pinckaers goes so far as to describe Ockham's work as "the first atomic explosion of the modern era." "The atom he split," though, "was . . . not physical but psychic," for Ockham shattered our concept of the human soul and thereby created a new, atomized vision of the human person and, ultimately, of society.

With Ockham, we meet what Pinckaers has called the *freedom of indifference.* Here, freedom is simply a neutral faculty of choice and choice is everything, for choice is a matter of self-assertion, of power. Will is the defining

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human attribute. Indeed, will is the defining attribute of all of reality. For God, too, is supremely willful, and the moral life as read through Ockhamite lenses is a contest of wills between my will and God's imposition of His will through the moral law.

Ockham's radical emphasis on the will is an idea with very serious "real world" consequences. It not only severs the moral life from human nature (which, for a nominalist, doesn't exist). At the same time, and because of that, it severs human beings from one another in a most dramatic way. For there can be no "common good" if there are only the particular goods of particular men and women who are each acting out their own particular willfulness.

Here, in the mid-fourteenth century, is the beginning of what we call today the "autonomy project": the claim that human beings are radically autonomous, self-creating "selves," whose primary relations to others are relations of power. From its Ockhamite beginning, as Pinckaers writes, "freedom of indifference was . . . impregnated with a secret passion for self-affirmation." Thus, over time, freedom was eventually led into the trap of self-interest from which Immanuel Kant tried, unsuccessfully, to rescue it by appeals to a "categorical imperative" that could be known by reason and that would, it was hoped, restore a measure of objectivity to morality. On a long view of the history of ideas, and freely conceding the twists and turns of intellectual fortune along the way, William of Ockham is the beginning of the line that eventually leads to Nietzsche's "will to power" and its profound effect on the civilization of our times.

Freedom, for Ockham, has little or no spiritual character. The reality is autonomous man, not virtuous man, for freedom has nothing to do with goodness, happiness, or truth. Freedom is simply willfulness. Freedom can attach itself to any object, so long as it does not run into a superior will, human or divine. Later in the history of ideas, when God drops out of the equation, freedom comes to be understood in purely instrumental or utilitarian terms. And if the road on which Ockham set out eventually leads to Nietzsche, it also leads, through even more twists and turns, to, for example, Princeton's Peter Singer and his claim that parents ought to be able to wait for a few weeks before deciding whether their newborn child should be allowed to live. Ideas do indeed have consequences.

From the Greeks down to Aquinas, every moral philosopher of note had assumed that the pursuit of happiness is *the* primary moral question. With William of Ockham, the profound linkages among freedom, virtue, and the pursuit of happiness are sundered: morality is mere obligation, freedom is mere willfulness. When Western thought took a decisively subjectivist turn in the seventeenth century, and when that subjectivism eventually gave birth to a principled skepticism about the human capacity to know anything with confidence, the result, which is much with us today, was the emergence of an intellectual culture of radical moral relativism lacking any thick notion of the common good. By positing a profound tension between freedom and reason (or, in his construction, will and reason), Ockham created a situation in which there are only two options: determinisms of a biological, racial, or ideological sort, or the radical relativism that, married to irrationalism, eventually yields nihilism. In either case, freedom self-destructs.

I suggest that this tale of two monks sheds light on why Isaiah Berlin's "two concepts of liberty" are finally unsatisfactory. Although Berlin concedes at the outset that "political theory is a branch of moral philosophy," he simply does not conjure with the "atomic explosion" that Ockham created in moral theory or with its results in political thought. When Berlin writes that "I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity," such that "political liberty is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others," he is taking an Ockhamite tack from the outset. Berlin openly admits that his "positive liberty" begins in "an act of will." In fact, however, his formulation of "negative liberty" also assumes that freedom is essentially a matter of the will. "Negative liberty" is simply that which allows me to avoid too many collisions with the wills of others. But this concept of "negative liberty" doesn't tell us much about how we resolve the inevitable conflicts between wills without raw coercion, or even why we should do so. "Negative liberty" accurately describes one important aspect of the political organization of freedom: the need to circumscribe and regulate coercive state power by law. But Berlin's "negative liberty" cannot provide an account of why that freedom has any moral worth beyond its being an expression of my will. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are drastically disconnected here.

Berlin goes so far as to suggest that, for a "schoolman" like Aquinas, as well as for the Jacobins and Communists of the modern period, it is legitimate to force others into living their freedom rightly. That kind of crude coercion was certainly true of Jacobins and Communists, but it is no part of a Thomistic theory of freedom. For the philosophical anthropology that underwrites Aquinas' freedom for excellence, an anthropology that contains thick moral convictions about the inalienable dignity and value of every human life, also demands a commitment to the method of persuasion in politics. Indeed, as the history of the past three decades has shown, it is today's devotees of "negative liberty" as reinterpreted by postmodern radical skeptics and relativists

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who are the primary exponents of coercion in the name of "tolerance" and "diversity"—even if that coercion is mediated through split decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

Isaiah Berlin could not escape—and perhaps did not even recognize—Ockham's trap. That is why his "two concepts of liberty" ultimately break down. And that is why we require, as individuals and as a society, a deeper understanding of the nature of freedom today—an understanding that challenges the freedom of indifference with freedom for excellence.

In addition to illuminating a crucial episode in the history of ideas, this tale of two monks also sheds light on grave public issues today. And in doing so, it reminds us that a "clash of civilizations" is being played out within our own society, as well as between ourselves and hostile forces bent on our destruction.

In the aftermath of the Communist crack-up in 1989-1991, there was a tremendous amount of euphoria in what was then rightly called the "free world." This euphoria went far beyond the undeniable satisfaction of seeing a great evil overcome, and more than one otherwise sober-minded observer was heard to propose that the democratic project—the great carrier of the modern quest for freedom—was now inevitably and irreversibly triumphant. In the first year of the new century, we have been rudely reminded of the fragility of freedom—of the hard fact, chiseled in stone on the Korean War Memorial on the National Mall, that "freedom is never free." Which is to say, we have been reminded of the fact that democracy is always an unfinished experiment, testing the capacity of each generation to live freedom nobly.

The first reminder came in the aftermath of dramatic advances in genetics, including the decryption of the human genome, and the biotechnologies this new knowledge rapidly spawned. Suddenly, Francis Fukuyama's image of the "end of history" seemed overrun by Aldous Huxley's "brave new world." Human beings, it became clear, would soon have the capacity to remanufacture the human condition—precisely by manufacturing or remanufacturing human beings. The new tyranny on the horizon was not the jackbooted totalitarian state of Orwell's *1984*; that was the tyranny that had haunted our dreams during what Jeane Kirkpatrick once aptly described as the "Fifty-Five Years' Emergency"—the civilizational crisis that ran from Hitler's military reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Rather, the new and ominous possibility on the near-term horizon was something quite different: the happy, if thoroughly dehumanized and massively coercive, dystopia of Huxley's brilliant imagination. Scientists and biotech industry executives now talk freely, if usually behind closed doors, of what Leon Kass has called the "immortality project." Here, they confidently tell us, is a possible future world without suffering, even without death—except perhaps death freely chosen as a remedy for terminal boredom. But as Huxley presciently discerned decades before the unraveling of the DNA double-helix, such a world would ultimately be an inhuman world: a world of souls without longing, without passion, without striving, without surprise, without desire—in a word, a world without love.

And here, too, we can find long-term radioactive traces from Ockham's "atomic explosion" in the fourteenth century. For Ockham's was a world without purpose, a world of willful means detached from ends. But so is the brave new world as Aldous Huxley described it. As one of the World Controllers muses in Huxley's novel,

> Once you began admitting explanations in terms of purpose—well, you didn't know what the results would be. It was the sort of idea that might easily decondition some of the more unsettled minds among the higher castes—make them . . . take to believing . . . that the goal was somewhere beyond, somewhere outside the present human sphere; that the purpose of life was not the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refinement of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge. Which was, the Controller reflected, quite possibly true. But not, in the present circumstances, admissible.

Tyranny thrives in a world in which means always trump ends. The freedom of indifference cannot sustain a truly free society.

The national debate over cloning and embryonic stem cell research over the past year ought to have given us pause, and precisely on this point. With rare exceptions, the first great public debate of the biotech era was conducted in almost exclusively utilitarian terms (when it was not reduced to appeals to "compassion" that did not constitute anything resembling a serious argument). What can be done to put this urgent and unavoidable debate onto more secure moral-philosophical ground? I suggest that it will require a rigorous reckoning with the degree to which the freedom of indifference has become the operative notion of freedom in much of our high culture, in the media, among many political leaders, in considerable parts of the mainline Protestant religious community, in the sciences, and in the biotech industry. Challenging the freedom of indifference with freedom for excellence is essential if we are to deploy our new genetic knowledge in ways that lead to human flour-

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ishing rather than to the soulless dystopia of the brave new world.

There will be—there already are—appeals to "pluralism" in these debates. Pluralism, however, is not mere plurality, as John Courtney Murray never tired of repeating. Plurality is sheer difference: a sociological fact, a staple of the human condition. Genuine pluralism is a civilizational achievement: the achievement of what Murray called an "orderly conversation"—a conversation about personal goods and the common good, about the relationship between freedom and moral truth, about the virtues necessary to form the kind of citizens who can live their freedom in such a way as to make the machinery of democracy serve genuinely humanistic ends.

That kind of orderly conversation cannot begin with the radical epistemological skepticism and moral relativism that inform today's Ockhamites and their defense of freedom as willfulness. It must begin, as Jefferson began the American democratic experiment, with the assertion and defense of *truths*. As Father Murray once wrote, "The American Proposition rests on the . . . conviction that there are truths; that they can be known; that they must be held; for if they are not held, assented to, worked into the texture of institutions, there can be no hope of founding a true City." It must begin, in other words, with a reaffirmation of freedom for excellence as the freedom to which we, like the Founders, can pledge our lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

The second challenge to what many commentators are now calling America's "holiday from history" came, of course, on September 11, 2001—a day of infamy that, in a very real sense, marked the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. The world has changed, and the change seems irreversible. The Republic, and the freedoms it embodies, are in grave peril from a new form of irrationalism and nihilism that expresses itself through a perverse and distorted form of monotheistic religion. The struggle against this new and present danger may well last a generation or more.

The roots of this new struggle run deep into history. Some argue, and I would not disagree, that they run more than 1,300 years into the past, and that what confronts us today is the contemporary expression of a civilizational contest that has ebbed and flowed for well over a millennium. Because its roots run so deeply into the religious and cultural subsoil of history—because we have been forcefully reminded over the past few months that the deepest currents of world-historical change *are* religious and cultural—analyzing the causalities that brought us to September 11, 2001 is no simple business. Yet amidst the inevitable complexities of history understood as an arena of moral responsibility, there has also been some welcome, and perhaps long overdue, simplicity.

For in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington, there was a remarkable resurgence of simple, indeed robust, moral clarity in a country that had long been told, by everyone from Alan Wolfe to Jerry Falwell, that it was awash in moral relativism. This moral clarity, and the resolve that accompanies it, seems to have retained its vigor among the vast majority of our people. Among certain parts of the intellectual class, however, it lasted, by my count, approximately ninety-six hours.

This seems to be the statute of limitations in the commentariat on radical moral relativism and its "real world" political offspring—appeasement strategies, moral equivalence theories, "root cause" analyses of terrorism, nonsense about "violence begetting violence," and self-loathing anti-Americanism of the most vulgar sort. Thus far, these intellectual and moral aberrations have been reasonably well confined to the farther fringes of the chattering classes in the United States. But it is well advanced among intellectuals and commentators in Western Europe. And it has everything to do, I suggest, with four themes that arise from the modern expression of Ockhamite nominalism: the deterioration of the idea of freedom into willfulness, the detachment of freedom from moral truth, an obsession with "choice," and the consequent inability to draw the most elementary moral conclusions about the imperative to resist evil.

There has been a remarkable resurgence of uncomplicated, unapologetic patriotism over the past months: flags, not yellow ribbons, are the icons of the day. But can this welcome recovery of patriotism be sustained unless it becomes, once again, the expression of a nobler concept of freedom than mere willfulness? Is happy hedonism that for which we are prepared to make the sacrifices that will be required of us? Or is it more likely that the acids of the relativism that accompany a merely negative concept of freedom as "noninterference" will eventually erode today's resurgent patriotism, too—to the point where appeasement will once again become a respectable word in the national political vocabulary?

A society without "oughts" tethered to truths cannot defend itself against aggressors motivated by distorted "oughts." That is the truth of which we should have been reminded when reading those chilling letters from the hijackers the week after September 11. The answer to a distorted concept of the good cannot be a radical relativism about the good. It must be a nobler concept of the good.

And that brings us back, at the end of the day, to our tale of two monks.

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Freedom for excellence is the freedom that will satisfy the deepest yearnings of the human heart to be free. It is more than that, though. The idea of freedom for excellence and the disciplines of self-command it implies are essential for democracy and for the defense of freedom.

Homo Voluntatis, Willful Man, cannot exploit the new genetic knowledge so that it serves the ends of freedom and avoids the brave new world. *Homo Voluntatis* cannot explain why some things that *can* be done should *not* be done. *Homo Voluntatis* cannot defend himself or the institutions of democracy against the new dangers to national security and world order. *Homo Voluntatis* cannot give an account of a freedom worth sacrificing, and even dying, for.

There are, indeed, two ideas of freedom. Both ideas have consequences. One of them is worthy of this nation. One of them will see us through to a future worthy of a free people. FT

End of the Road

When all roads led to Rome,
unRoman ways
made inroads
into Rome
so Rome's ways changed.
Now when

strangers go
to Rome,
to do what Romans do,
neither they
nor Romans know
what Romans do, to do,

some even deeming
it unRoman
they once knew.

Paul Lake

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Liberalism's Religion Problem

Stephen L. Carter

In *God's Long Summer*, Charles Marsh's splendid book on religion in the civil rights movement, the theologian recounts a fascinating anecdote about Fannie Lou Hamer, a founder and the guiding spirit of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). In the summer of 1964 the MFDP waged a challenge to the credentials of the lily-white Mississippi slate of delegates to the Democratic National Convention, a slate chosen by the lily-white Mississippi Democratic Party. The MFDP offered an integrated slate of delegates, many of whom, like Mrs. Hamer herself, had tried to register to vote and had been punished for it. The controversy terrified President Lyndon Johnson, who wanted no blot on the celebration of his nomination. So he sent his Vice President-in-waiting, Hubert Humphrey, to visit Mrs. Hamer, with orders to buy her off.

Humphrey, believing that he was undertaking a political negotiation, asked Fannie Lou Hamer what she wanted. Mrs. Hamer, a devout evangelical Christian, responded: "The beginning of a New Kingdom right here on earth."

Humphrey, evidently stunned, explained that his political future was on the line if he could not close a deal with her to end the credentials challenge. He apparently wanted her to understand that his nomination would create a strong voice for racial equality at the highest levels of the White House, reason enough to compromise. Fannie Lou Hamer, who had survived beating and torture in a Mississippi jail for insisting on her constitutional rights, was unimpressed. This was her reply: "Senator Humphrey, I know lots of people in Mississippi who have lost their jobs for trying to register to vote. I had to leave the plantation where I worked in Sunflower County. Now if you lose this job of Vice President because you do what is right, because you help MFDP, everything will be all right. God will take care of you." This alone must have been hard on Senator Humphrey, who had fought for civil rights long before it became fashionable in the Democratic Party, and whose speech on the subject at the 1948 convention is one of the most important moments of twentieth-century political history. Mrs. Hamer, however, was relentless: "But if you take [the vice presidential nomination] this way, why, you will never be able to do any good for civil rights, for poor people, for peace or any of those things you talk about. Senator Humphrey, I'm gonna pray to Jesus for you." And that, according to Marsh, was the end of the Johnson Administration's negotiation with Hamer.

I begin with the story of the attempt to make a deal with Mrs. Hamer because it has much to teach us about what can happen when strong religious commitment runs up against the world of secular politics—and secular politics is, of course, the world that produces law. I wish to address the relation of religion generally—and Christianity in particular—to the liberal theory of law. The rule of law is a fundamental principle of liberal democracy. The exercise of political and personal freedoms and the functioning of the market economy both rely on and are constrained by the necessity of obedience to law. Liberal theory in turn relies on rules of recognition to tell us what counts as a law—we develop ways to distinguish between a bill to raise taxes that is passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor on the one hand and, on the other, an order from Joe down at Joe's Diner raising taxes because he thinks it is a good idea.

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In liberal theory, however, legal legitimacy cannot rest simply on the process through which a law is enacted. Liberal democracy rests also on the idea that there are fundamental principles of justice to which laws should cohere. At minimum, these principles enable us to tell good laws from bad ones, so that we know which laws to favor and which to oppose. In addition, some theorists believe that the principles of justice enable us to impose a just order on the society, notwithstanding contrary acts that meet all the requirements to be recognized as laws. In other words, a law's inconsistency with the principles of justice on which the society rests can be proof of its invalidity. This notion underlies, to take the most obvious example, the contemporary model of constitutional law. It is therefore unsurprising that in political philosophy identifying the principles of justice to which the apparatus of governance should (or must) conform has become nearly the entire game. Contending theorists have created an enormous literature, arguing for and against various ways of deriving the principles. The literature shares two admirable commitments: first, to liberal principles, and, second, to the rule of law.

From the Christian point of view, however, these commitments, while important, are insufficient. The first and highest duty of the individual Christian believer is to Christ. What this means for the community in which the believer lives has been a matter of sharp debate among theologians for centuries. Some have opted for a society run according to Christian mores—for example, the medieval Catholic Church, the early followers of the Reformed tradition, the preachers of the "Christian America" movement in the nineteenth century, some liberation theologians of the twentieth, and, of course, some of the conservative Christian political organizations that have, over the past two decades, so shaken the national political scene. Others have simply insisted that the society should be well ordered, should not require of the believer what Christ forbids, and should basically leave the believer alone to go his own way—for example, some of the very early Christians, the Anabaptists (and their American descendants, including the Mennonites and the Amish), the dissenting preachers of the First Great Awakening in the eighteenth century, and many evangelicals even in the twentieth. (Lately, a fair number of conservative Christian political activists in the United States have also gravitated from the first group to the second.)

Mrs. Hamer, like so many religious activists in the nation's history, fell into the first group: she wanted to reorganize American society along the lines that she believed the Lord required. In this she stood in the shoes of the abolitionists and the prohibitionists alike, who also wanted to repair human damage to God's creation. Johnson and Humphrey shared a more modest goal: they simply wanted to win the election. They wanted Mrs. Hamer on board, but only if they could first transform her activism into a more familiar category, so that her religious commitments might either be submerged or be turned to the political purposes of the Democratic Party.

More important to the present purpose, the story may also do service as a metaphor for a larger conversation. Mrs. Hamer may play the part of the unapologetically religious voice in our public councils; Johnson and Humphrey may stand in for liberal theory. In their roles, they could accept only part of what Mrs. Hamer desired—the part justifiable in liberal terms. Insofar as her argument was couched in illiberal terms, however, they could not accept it and, indeed, could not really acknowledge it. And according to contemporary liberal theory, what made Mrs. Hamer's argument illiberal was not its goal but its nature: she insisted on pressing a religious case in the public square.

The liberal state is uncomfortable with deep religious devotion—and, for the most part, so is its product, liberal law. Religious belief is reduced to precise parity with all other forms of belief, an act of leveling that is already threatening to religion itself. In practice, liberalism often reduces religion to an even smaller role than other belief systems, seeking to limit or shut off its access to the public square and often deriding the efforts of the religious to live the lives they think the Lord requires when those efforts seem to conflict with other liberal goals.

The discomfort of contemporary liberal theory with strong religious commitment poses a particular challenge for me, as a committed Christian, teaching at a university that, despite its religious roots, is committed to a vigorously secular ethos. Unfortunately, like so many secular institutions, Yale now and then loses track of what makes distinctive religion valuable to nonreligionists, and thus falls into the common liberal trap of leveling, trying to force everyone into accepting a given set of meanings that the institution prefers. So in the late 1990s Yale rejected the petition of a group of Orthodox Jewish students who wanted to live off campus (because they believe that the atmosphere in the dormitories encourages premarital sex, which they believe God wants them to avoid) and the request by the Christian Legal Society for the freedom to recruit at the law school while hiring only . . . well, Christians.

It may be that the reader will disagree with my view that Yale was wrong in both cases. But I do not cite these examples to argue against what the university did. Rather, I suggest that Yale's reactions in both these cases mirror the tragedy of liberal theory when it meets religious commitment. The basic response of liberal theory to serious religion is to try to speak words that

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seem to celebrate it (as a part of the freedom of belief, or conscience, or the entitlement to select one's own version of the good) while in effect trying to domesticate it—or, if that fails, to try to destroy it.

This accusation might sound overstated, but it should be unsurprising. Liberalism is a theory of the state in its relationship with individuals, but not just a theory of the organization or output of the state; liberalism also seeks to explain how the state should both stimulate and regulate the search for meaning. Religions, too, seek to provide meanings to their adherents, meanings of a deep and transcendent sort. What is religion, after all, but a narrative a people tells itself about its relationship with God, usually over an extended period of time? And if the narrative is truly about the meaning God assigns to the world, as Christianity's narrative is, the follower of the religion, if truly faithful, can hardly select a different meaning simply because the state says so. If a religionist believes that God's love does not allow some human beings to enslave others, no amount of teaching by the merely mortal agency of the state should cause the religionist to change. Quite the contrary: the religionist, if he believes that the state is committing great evil, has little choice but to try to get the state to change.

I should make clear that I do not believe, as some do, that conflict between liberalism and religious commitment is inevitable. The liberalism of the Enlightenment, for example, is generally compatible with a Christian view of the world. Christianity is not, in its essence, opposed to representative democracy, to a regime of individual rights, or to the principle that we should, for the most part, be left alone by the state so that we can pursue individual visions of the good. Quite the contrary: Christianity probably could not survive in the absence of these fundamental assumptions of liberal democracy. Democracy has been good for Christianity. (The distorted Christianity of the Middle Ages, when the Church tried to create, as the historian Paul Johnson says, a "total Christian society" in Europe, soon was barely recognizable as Christian.)

Similarly, the process-based liberalism that formed the heart of legal theory for a large chunk of the second half of the twentieth century is entirely consistent with a Christian view of the world. For the process theorist, law was recognized by its compliance with certain "rules of recognition." Morality and law were not entirely separate, but their spheres were not thought to be identical. One could recognize a valid law even though it required or allowed something that was wrong; one could recognize a valid realm of private conduct even though my actions within it contradicted the moral judgment of others. Christianity, precisely because the first allegiance of every Christian is to God, must have a reliable basis for comprehending the state's commands. It is God's instruction that Christians obey the constituted authorities, the leaders of the state, who hold their offices from God in trust, except when the commands of the state are inconsistent with the demands of the Lord. But one can neither give allegiance to the constituted authorities on earth nor defy them for Christ's sake until one knows just what the authorities have commanded.

Yet neither Enlightenment liberalism nor process-based liberalism represents the entire story of contemporary liberal philosophy. Liberalism as a theory cannot help but take on a triumphal character, for the ideals of liberalism have largely triumphed in the political world; the state is nowadays a liberal state. The trouble is that the state and the religions are in competition to explain the meaning of the world. When the meanings provided by the one differ from the meanings provided by the other, it is natural that the one on the losing end will do what it can to become a winner. Often, especially in today's mass-produced world, characterized by the intrusion into every household of the materialist interpretation of reality, religions are just overwhelmed, which leads most of them to change and many of them to die. But more subtle tools are available in the assault on religious meaning. Indeed, all through history, the state has tried to domesticate religion, sometimes by force, simply eliminating dissenting faiths; sometimes through the device of creating an official, "established" church; sometimes—as in twentieth-century American experience—through reducing the power of religion by confining its freedom within a state-granted, state-defined, and state-controlled structure of constitutional rights.

Religion, however, is no idle bystander. If the state tries to domesticate religion, its most powerful competitor in the creation of meaning, then religion tries simultaneously to subvert the state. Liberalism sees this as one of religion's dangers, which it is: history has demonstrated time and again the mischief the institutional church can cause (especially for its doctrinal purity) when it grabs for the reins of secular authority. But the tendency of religion, at its best, to subvert the state is also one of religion's virtues. Every theory of the state—at least when put into practice—tends toward hegemony. When theory becomes law, it becomes power, and power works to sustain itself. Another lesson history teaches us is that every state seeks to restrict or eliminate competing centers of meaning. Thus every state, however noble the theory on which it is constructed, needs its subversives.

The liberal state is no exception to the general rule. Liberalism, too, tends toward hegemony. Not content to serve as a theory of organization of the state, it has grown into a theory of organization of private institutions in the state. If the state itself cannot discriminate among its

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citizens on the basis of race or sex or religion, then private institutions, it seems, should not do so either. One need not support any of these forms of discrimination to see the obvious conceptual difficulty: a theory that developed in order to explain the organization of the state (from which there is no simple exit for dissenters or subjects of discrimination) becomes a theory about the organization of everything. And that, I think, is the true source of the supposed conflict between liberal theory on one side and religion on the other.

There are in the United States of America a number of private colleges that accept only women as students. As of this writing, there is but one that accepts only men. A few decades ago there were significant numbers of both. The change in numbers is an artifact of the liberal idea that private organizations should follow the lead of public ones. (The democracy that the theorists of pluralism celebrated in the fifties and sixties believed exactly the opposite, but that is a rather moot point.) If it is wrong for public organizations to discriminate on the basis of sex (specifically, against women), then it is wrong for private organizations to do so. This idea is often dressed up in plausible theoretical garb—private male-only organizations may be conceptualized, for example, as supporting bulwarks for women's oppression—but no matter how it is dressed, it remains the same animal. That animal is hegemony. Its enemy is diversity.

I have no particular brief for male-only colleges. I would never have dreamed of attending one and would not wish it for my son. But I am not prepared to say that no rational, public-spirited parents could ever decide that such a school would be better for their son than a sexually integrated campus would be. Certainly enough parents think that way for the choice to be one that the market would support. But it is the tendency of liberalism, as for all successful theories of the state, to find danger in competing systems of meaning, and so to strive to eliminate them. Consequently, male-only colleges, male-only private clubs, and (on many campuses, including my own) male-only bathrooms have all died, or are on the way to dying, sacrificed to the public virtue of sexual equality. One may celebrate the public virtue and, at the same time, mourn the death of private diversity.

Democracy needs diversity because democracy advances through dissent, difference, and dialogue. The idea that the state should not only create a set of meanings, but try to alter the structure of institutions that do not match it, is ultimately destructive of democracy because it destroys the differences that create the dialectic. Yet the idea is a popular one—and religions, precisely because the meanings they offer can be so radically different from those proposed by the state, often bear the brunt of hegemony. Thus, for example, America's anti-Catholicism during the nineteenth and early twentieth century was not simply a matter of private discrimination; the state, especially through the curriculum of the public schools, was heavily involved in what might fairly be described as an effort to wean Catholic children away from the "un-American" religion of their parents. The reason? The meaning thought to be basic to the Catholic way of life was inconsistent with the meaning thought to be basic to the American (in this case, Protestant) way of life. (Some of the most prominent voices of the early Republic expressed doubts that Catholicism was even covered by religious freedom, for religious freedom was the freedom to practice a free religion, which Catholicism, according to its critics, was not.)

To take a more recent controversy, the Platform for Action and Beijing Declaration, adopted at the close of the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, seems to commit the signatories to undoing centers of power, including private ones, in their own countries that are oppressive of women as the phrase is understood politically in the West—a proposition that traditional religionists, men and women, all over the world see as a threat to their freedom to build communities of meaning independent of the state. By liberal standards, Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Judaism, a variety of Bible-centered Protestant communities, and the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam are all oppressive of women. One reading of the Beijing Declaration is that the signing states must try to alter the substantive content of these religious traditions.

But why not set out to change the religion of the people? No state is truly interested in preserving independent communities of meaning. States, historically, have been interested in preserving themselves. The liberal state should be different, because of its supposed neutrality among competing conceptions of the good; but in practice, and more and more in theory, the liberal state is just as insistent as any other that everybody should believe the same basic things . . . as long as they are liberal things.

It is not surprising that the conference seemed to view religion as a special danger to its effort to impose a single set of meanings on the world, because religion has been one of the few institutions that have had modest success in resisting the hegemonic pull of liberalism. I do not mean to suggest, obviously, that no religion can have tenets that are politically "liberal," or that an institutional religion always errs when it reinterprets traditional doctrine in light of the lived experience of God's people. Quite the contrary. Religions always understand the will of God imperfectly; consequently, they may come to a richer understanding of

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that will with the passage of time; and thus does doctrine evolve. Moreover, for all that critics may deride traditional religion for purportedly antiquated understandings of sexuality and the role of women, the Western religious traditions have often been, and are today, well to the left of the American norm on such matters as sharing the wealth and caring for the oppressed.

On the other hand, some Western religions have caved in to the pressure to organize according to the meanings propounded by the state, more or less agreeing with the proposition that the same rules that guide the state should also guide private institutions within the state, and so they have decided to change their teachings to fit the changing beliefs of the people—they have tried to be, in a word, popular. As a Christian, I find mysterious the notion that God's will can be decided by majority vote, because it seems to confirm the ancient critique of religion, that man has created God in his own image. When religion surrenders to the political or cultural passion of the moment, whether a passion of the left or a passion of the right, it yields the transcendent character that marks the religious sense as potentially distinctive among ways of understanding the world. One sees this process at work, for example, among those politically active conservative evangelicals who seem confident that there is a correct biblical position on everything from building a strategic missile defense system to cutting the capital gains tax; and also among those progressive Protestants who seem to believe that only a shameless homophobe, rather than a careful student of God's word, could possibly oppose the blessing of same-sex unions.

The conflict with liberal theory, however, is posed not by those faith traditions that surrender to the pull of the world but by those that struggle against it, exercising their power of resistance. These resisting faiths, as we might call them, are those that insist on teaching different meanings from those imposed by the state, even in the face of public disapproval or, in many cases, actual state pressure. The resisting faiths have insisted on their right (and perhaps their responsibility) to be different, to teach different meanings, and, in some cases, they have amassed sufficient political clout to remain so.

In America, Christianity has sometimes been a resisting faith, and has sometimes surrendered to the culture instead. Yet Christians are, without question, called to resist: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). The resistance to which Christians are called is not necessarily active dissent, though it sometimes may be. The more important form of resistance is active difference, living life in a way that sets the Christian apart from the culture. Active difference is necessarily resistance in an era when cultural, political, and legal pressures combine in an effort to influence fundamental values.

For a resisting faith to survive and thrive, political clout is often crucial. The courts are not usually helpful; as Frederick Mark Gedicks has pointed out, no adherent of a non-Christian, nonmainstream faith has ever won a First Amendment religious freedom case in the Supreme Court. Dissenting Christians have not fared well either, notably in recent years, as the courts have more or less abandoned any serious protection of religious liberty as a distinct constitutional right. In particular, the federal judiciary has all but abandoned the once-lively theory of accommodation, under which, in certain circumstances, the dissenting religionist is excused from compliance with a law that applies to others. This theory was used in the nineteenth century, for example, to allow churches to hire pastors from abroad in defiance of restrictions on immigration; and it was used in the twentieth to permit Amish parents to keep their children home from school after the eighth grade. But from the mid-1980s onward, the theory has largely disappeared, so the Supreme Court had no trouble, in 1986, allowing the Air Force to punish a Jewish officer for refusing to remove his yarmulke indoors. Today's judges have forgotten what yesterday's recalled: that religious freedom is nothing if it is not the freedom to be different. The different meanings of life that religions at their best supply translate into different ways of living—in short, into diversity—if the state allows believers sufficient space.

With the courts largely out of the picture, the legislature has become the principal battleground of religious freedom, as different traditions jockey for advantage, or at least survival, resulting in all the favoritism and all the discrimination that one would expect. The devolution upon the legislature of the duty to carve out exceptions from general laws for the benefit of religious liberty helps explain why, for example, the Roman Catholic Church maintains its freedom to ordain only men as priests, notwithstanding the nation's antidiscrimination laws, but adherents of Santería are often prosecuted when they sacrifice animals (as their faith requires) in violation of animal rights ordinances. It is not that we value animals more than women, but that we value Catholics more than Santeros.

Resisting faiths have been an important source of dissent in our democratic polity, and sometimes the dissenters have prevailed. The abolitionist and civil rights movements are the most prominent examples, but they are far from the only ones. Liberal theory tends to celebrate the results achieved by those movements—an end to slavery, the development of formal legal protection against racial discrimination—without ever hav-

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ing very much to say about the actual source of the power of resistance. But the source matters. Not only do religions often teach different meanings than the state does, but religion, because it is at its heart a communal rather than an individual exercise, provides moral and spiritual support to the dissenters, strengthening them to stand against a tide of public disapproval. Sometimes, as with Fannie Lou Hamer, the lonely religious dissenter helps spark a movement that changes America. At other times, the lonely dissenter, along with the resisting faith, drowns in the sea of hegemonic meaning, as many Native American and African religious traditions did in the nineteenth century, and as the Mormons nearly did at the same time.

But the resisting faiths, at their best, are able to survive, and sometimes even to thrive, in the face of state pressure. As the legal scholar Robert Cover once pointed out, it is at the moments when official disapproval is greatest that the resisting faith learns most firmly what constitutes its core. The subversive power of religion is tested precisely at the moment when the meaning it teaches and the meaning the state teaches are most sharply opposed. If the state teaches the virtues of enslaving human beings and the resisting faith preaches the opposite, those who hear the Word will be forced to choose. Sometimes the nation will choose to continue to do whatever the religion, through its witness, seeks to end. But more often than many observers realize, the resisting faith will persuade citizens outside the faith that its set of meanings is (on one issue, at least) the correct one; and if the resisting faith persuades enough citizens, the state is forced to change.

This last point matters. Although some liberal philosophers have argued that religious language in public debate will lead only to cacophony, history suggests otherwise: at times, the religiously defended proposition prevails. The philosopher Charles Taylor argues that liberal uneasiness with strong religious commitment rests in large measure upon this historical truth, or its contemporary resonance. According to Taylor, an important reason that so many theorists of the present age seek to design rules for public argument from which religious language is absent is that religious language often wins. Unfortunately, it does not always win on behalf of good (that is, liberal) causes. The obvious solution is to inhibit the ability of religious commitment to alter the nature of the state.

Yet is such a goal attainable—let alone desirable? Let us ponder for a moment what has become a commonplace of liberal theory: that actions must be justified according to principles that are accessible, through dialogue, to all citizens. Different writers have different visions of what this means, but all of them seem to agree on the need, whether as a thought experiment or an actual model of dialogue, for the development of a mediating language in order to facilitate a conversation open on the same terms to all citizens. To such theorists, religious arguments on behalf of *P* or *Not P* make dialogue more difficult. And when the institutions of the state (and sometimes citizens themselves) actually act publicly out of religious commitment, a deeply illiberal moment has arrived. In liberal theory, the argument that the society should do *P* because God wills it is not merely wrong in the sense that it is insufficiently justified—it is, literally, incomprehensible.

Why incomprehensible? Consider the approach of Bruce Ackerman, who offers the following hypothetical. Suppose that two citizens are having a conversation. The first of them, Diviner, has before him a black box. He says that the black box has authoritatively determined which policy the state should pursue—let us continue to call it *P*. The black box, he adds, is in direct communication with God, so, really, it is God who has determined that we should do *P*. How is his fellow citizen to respond? According to Ackerman, it is sufficient for his skeptical fellow citizen (Ackerman calls him Democrat) to point out that he himself is unpersuaded that the black box is in communication with God. Therefore even if it happens that Diviner is right about the content of God's will, he must find a way to justify *P* that will persuade the skeptical Democrat. And so, in the end, the supporters of *P* must repair to the tools of secular political argument.

As an observation about practical politics, Ackerman's account is entirely persuasive; that is, members of a given resisting faith are unlikely to persuade skeptics of other faiths, or of no faith, simply by consulting their sacred black box and then repeating, "God commands it!" Perhaps that is why relatively few groups that have any actual access to the levers of decisionmaking power behave this way. Even the Christian Coalition, that great bogeyman of contemporary liberalism, no longer couches many of its public appeals in biblical terms. The Contract with the American Family, the public platform of the Christian Coalition in the mid-1990s, reads, almost in its entirely, as a secular political document that any conservative organization might have produced. Both the goals the Contract with the American Family proposes and the arguments offered to promote them read like secular policy analysis. This result should scarcely be surprising: if one wants to prevail in politics, one must do what politics requires.

Some liberal critics of the Christian Coalition have argued that, by creating public documents that do not discuss religion, the group is concealing its true motivation. I agree with this criticism and am profoundly troubled by it—but I do not think political liberals should be. In contemporary liberal theory, religionists who wish to enter the public square are *supposed* to restate

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their arguments in the language of secular politics. The Christian Coalition should be applauded by liberals for its willingness to do what liberal theory requires.

Why, then, am I troubled? For the same reason I am always concerned when the people of the garden decide that the wilderness is attractive. As C. S. Lewis pointed out many years ago, the practical need to be other than itself is one of the reasons that a religious organization should be wary of engaging in partisan politics. He was writing against the establishment of a "Christian Party" in England, and his argument was persuasive. In a multireligious democracy, the need for political compromise is so extreme that the putatively religious organization that decides to be actively political will, inevitably, be transformed into a political organization that was once religious—in the same way, for instance, that Yale is a secular university that was once religious. This, I believe, is what is happening, or perhaps has already happened, to the Christian Coalition. Democrat is prevailing over Diviner: the Christian Coalition is learning not to talk too much about the will of God. That is why liberal theorists who oppose religious language in politics should be pleased that religious conservatives have gained such power in the Republican Party: the process of domestication of politically active white conservative evangelicals is well under way, and may be irreversible.

But perhaps we have erred in considering the story only from Democrat's point of view. Diviner might not be quite so ready to accept dialogic defeat. For example, Diviner might persuade a majority of his fellow citizens that the voice emanating from the box is indeed the voice of God. Then the majority would have a perfectly adequate reason to follow the voice . . . or perhaps we should say the Voice. Moreover, our analysis assumes the stability of Democrat's preferences when, in practice, who knows? Democrat himself might be converted to Diviner's faith, and so accept the judgment of the box. In other words, there is no reason, a priori, to suppose that Diviner cannot persuade the majority of his fellow citizens, or perhaps all of them, that the Voice is to be obeyed *simply because it is the Voice.* If the goal is to find a language that all citizens might in principle accept, the language of the Voice might turn out to be it.

But even if a society-wide religious conversion is theoretically possible, liberal theory need not concede that the possibility is relevant. The dialogue liberalism envisions is, for the most part, a hypothetical one—that is, a thought experiment. Ackerman, for example, need not be read as seeking to demonstrate how an actual conversation between Democrat and Diviner might flow. He is trying to show why the individual (or the state) already committed to liberal principles should not act on a proposition merely because the Voice has commanded it. The question, therefore, is not whether a majority of citizens agrees with what the Voice commands, but whether what the Voice commands is itself justified according to the principles of the liberal state. In short, it is not the actual dialogue of the liberal state but the work of the liberal state that must, in its formal justification, be liberal.

Consequently, it may matter less what language citizens use in arguing over policy than whether it is possible, through a dialogue according to liberal principles, to justify the policy itself. Liberalism, as a political theory, is nowadays about output, not input; ends, not means. This in turn suggests that the liberal concern about religion in public dialogue is at least partly misplaced. It turns out not to matter much what language citizens actually use in arguing over policy; what matters is liberal analysis of the policy itself. One can therefore, consistently with Ackerman's thesis, envision two separate dialogues—one among the citizens, who are trying to govern themselves, and the other by the actual instrument of organized state power, as it tries to justify what it has done. What matters is the work of the state, not the reasoning behind it. And although I suspect that my colleague and friend Bruce Ackerman and I would often test the output of the state against somewhat different principles, I think we agree on this point.

But it is not a point liberal theorists generally are prepared to accept. Ackerman's vision might ultimately be about ends, not means, but many theorists seem perfectly serious in trying to set forth limits for real debate. The philosopher John Rawls, whose fine book *A Theory of Justice* is taught to undergraduates everywhere as a thought experiment, strongly implies in his more recent book *Political Liberalism* that he is serious in trying to design an actual dialogue, not a hypothetical one. Even writers otherwise sensitive to the need to preserve the distinctive religious sphere against liberalism's assault—I have in mind, for example, the legal scholar Kent Greenawalt—have been unambiguous in their preference for a public square in which debate is carried on in a secular political language.

If the language of public debate must be secular, religious citizens are required, as Michael Perry has put it, to "bracket" their religious selves, leaving behind, before entering the public square, the very aspect of personality that lends meaning to their lives. The idea that religious citizens must remake themselves before joining debate might have an abstract logical appeal, but in practice it simply represents another form of official pressure on the religious to be less than their full selves. Why should anybody be surprised? It is hard to build a liberal public order (or any official public order) in the face of powerful sources of resistance. Despite liberal disclaimers, I have always believed that

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this is one of the reasons that liberal theory worries so about religion: it might indeed seek to destroy the state. Better to destroy religion first. The destruction may be subtle, as in the morally nonsensical idea that it is possible for schools to teach sex education without moral content, even though few if any religions teach that sexuality is amoral. (Certainly the Christian tradition does not.) Or the destructive urge can be quite direct, as in the notion, presented by a growing number of political theorists but really going back to Dewey, that the state should wean children away from any illiberal religions their parents might try to teach them. Liberal theorists seem to believe that deep faith commitments pose serious threats to the order they are trying to create. I hope they are wrong. If they are right, then the order is not worth preserving.

Which brings us back to the summer of 1964 and Lyndon Johnson's sabotage of the Freedom Democrats, led by Fannie Lou Hamer.

Fannie Lou Hamer's solidly Christian faith, as Charles Marsh meticulously details, was the wellspring of her public activism. She believed herself to be answering a divine call. Yet what happened after the abortive negotiation with Humphrey is quite instructive. Rebuffed by Hamer, who claimed to be guided entirely by her faith, the party turned to other leaders of the MFDP, people who were better educated than Hamer and who were, in Johnson's eyes, easier to handle. They knew how the game was played in a way that Hamer did not. A compromise was worked out behind her back, the lily-white delegation was seated, and the brief challenge to the segregationist Democrats was turned back by a President who despised them.

It is fascinating to think that most Americans who have heard of her consider Fannie Lou Hamer a hero. In contemporary liberal theory, Mrs. Hamer could perhaps be viewed as a villain in her effort to use openly religious language in a nefarious scheme to impose a frankly religious order on the nation, and Humphrey and Johnson as heroes for going behind her back, sabotaging her inspirational leadership in order to negotiate with more practical MFDP members to destroy their leader and their movement. If Hamer is viewed heroically rather than villainously, then perhaps Charles Taylor is correct, and the purported liberal distaste for religious voices in political dialogue is simply a distaste for a particular set of political results that those voices, as articulated today, might conjure.

Let us, in any event, make no mistake: the mass protest wing of the civil rights movement, the part that was moved by religious inspiration and in turn inspired a nation, did not truly achieve its goal. America was reformed but not remade. The state did not come to revolve, as Hamer hoped and Martin Luther King, Jr. preached, around a Gospel of Love; rather, it retained its capitalist core and widened somewhat the set of beneficiaries. The state came to see its job, not as permanently changing the nation in a fundamental way in the search for a greater vision of love (for Hamer, Christian love), but rather as the permanent establishment of vast civil rights bureaucracies to monitor those aspects of equality that are measurable. The existing order was not subverted; it was reformed in minor ways that siphoned off enough support from the more radical aspects of Hamer's vision (and King's) so as to avoid grappling with the more fundamental challenges that the civil rights movement posed. The state, in short, refused to allow itself to be subverted by the resisting faith. It was a lot cheaper to invent affirmative action and buy people off.

I hope that this does not seem unfair, but it is easy to forget that Hamer was hardly alone in understanding racial oppression in religious terms. The civil rights era was a time when the fabled separation of church and state utterly dissolved, as if by some divine magic. In those heady years, the nation's politics was moved by the openly religious appeals of the *Reverend* Martin Luther King, Jr., head of the Southern *Christian* Leadership Conference. True, we saw the wonderful courage of heroic lawyers and heroic political leaders and heroic judges—but it was the remarkable heroism of ordinary black people, facing police dogs and assassins' bullets, that captured the popular imagination. And many of those ordinary black people believed profoundly that their cause was just because God was on their side. They saw no need, as philosophers today seem to think is the better course in a liberal democracy, to reconfigure their arguments in terms of secular morality. On the contrary: to speak in some other, more acceptably secular language would have been to leave their own best selves behind. So they marched and suffered and praised God, and, in some ways, changed America forever. This, surely, was a resisting faith in action.

Why was it necessary to go behind Fannie Lou Hamer's back? America, it seems, was not prepared to receive the message she insisted on bringing. Neither was the Democratic Party. In particular, neither Johnson nor Humphrey was prepared to receive a message that did not result in the two of them getting precisely what they wanted. And this is at the heart of liberalism's notion that committed religionists are dangerous in the public square because it is hard to do business with them: what is meant is, they may be hard to persuade and, therefore, we might not get what we want.

The *what we want* of contemporary liberal theory is the exercise of our freedom of choice, or, more properly, our *freedoms* of choice. Modern liberalism shares its ideological foundations with free-market capitalism, because both envision human beings as bundles of pref-

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erences. The role of the liberal state (like the role of the market) is to create spaces in which the maximum number of preferences can be pursued, with the minimum amount of interference with the pursuit by others of their own preferences. In contemporary partisan politics (not to be confused with liberal theory), all sides have surrendered to this ideology. The fact that Republicans seem to think the preferences that matter most are economic and the Democrats seem to think the preferences that matter most are sexual and reproductive should not blind us to the simple truth that both parties are up to the same mischief: in real America today, as in the hypothetical America of liberal theory, it is the individual, unconnected to any sense of self-restraint, who matters most.

The point bears emphasis. The seeming incompatibility between liberal democracy and strong religious commitment is said, by the theorists of liberalism, to be about means. But it is really about ends. Much of liberal theory before the middle of the twentieth century focused on the question that has driven the Western religions from their founding—*What is best for man?*—and thus was about ends. This should scarcely be surprising, because the supposed humanism of such thinkers as Kant, and certainly the dogmatic liberalism of Locke, was shaped by the experience of religious ferment in a Europe in which the answer to this question (what I will call the basic question) carried abiding political and social significance. The project of the Enlightenment, like the project of the Protestant Reformation that preceded it and in most ways inspired it, did not hold that the basic question had no proper answer, or that all answers were equally good; the Enlightenment project held, rather, that human reason was sufficient to discover what the answer was.

Contemporary liberal theory has built from the Enlightenment project an ideal of process, pushing the state into the background, not because the state is unimportant but because the individual is more important—a valuable and still mostly unlearned lesson. But liberalism has gone past this sensible point, pressing for a reinterpretation of the basic question itself. If each of us, in the exercise of individual reason, has the ability to answer the basic question, the state, say today's theorists, should not interfere (beyond a carefully prescribed minimum, designed to maximize the freedom of others) with our freedom to live whatever answer we happen to have found. But note what has changed in liberalism. No longer is the basic question that each of us must ask the communal and perhaps even transcendent *What is best for man?* Now the basic question is *What is best for me?* (What we might call basic question two.) The role of the liberal state is not to provide us with a space in which to reason together about the answer to the question—an answer that might then suffice for an entire community—but to provide us with the space to invent our own glorious diversity of answers, among which the state, with rare exceptions, will assiduously refuse to choose.

Many contemporary theorists—I have in mind, for example, Stephen Macedo and William Galston—seem willing to discard the solid post-Rawlsian liberal tenet that the state must be neutral among competing conceptions of the good. In order to create a world in which citizens are able to pursue their own answers to basic question two—*What is best for me?*—it is important, evidently, to develop citizens who themselves see the pursuit of basic question two as important. Education for democracy, or for liberal citizenship, is the way the proposition is sometimes put: children must be trained, from the time they are young, to accept liberal precepts, including the central importance of basic question two. That is why so many liberal theorists are so scathing in their attacks on *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, a 1972 decision in which the Supreme Court allowed the Old Order Amish to remove their children from school after the eighth grade. The Amish, and the Supreme Court, saw further formal education as a threat to the Amish tradition, which is based in the terrible suffering of the Anabaptist experience and thus quite understandably preaches separation from the world. The critics, led by Justice William Douglas, argued that the refusal of Amish parents to send their children to school for ninth grade and beyond harmed the children—by denying them the tools they would need to lead lives in pursuit of the answer to basic question two.

Contemporary liberalism has constructed a worldview that exalts the individual self as a bundle of desires, the fulfillment of those desires in turn protected by rights. This criticism of liberalism is hardly new, and many theorists would not consider it a criticism at all. But Christianity, almost by its nature, must reject the liberal edifice, for Christianity constructs a worldview exalting not the individual but the connection—connection to other humans and, ultimately, to God. The Christian tradition teaches that the believer must die to self in order to live in Christ, and must reject the world for Christ's sake. Christianity, in short, is more about duty than choice. Parents who raise their children to understand their lives this way are training them to be other than what liberal theory says they should be; but a liberal state that tries to interfere is one that many committed Christians are likely to see as the enemy.

There is something chilling, as the theologian Stanley Hauerwas has pointed out, in the inability of liberal theory to give an account of why bearing and raising children is a positive good—children are mere choices, the outcomes of the exercise of rights—or, for

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that matter, to find a stronger explanation of what is wrong with murder than the argument that the victim of the murder is deprived of his or her rights. Most people would consider the value of children or the horror of murder to be obvious. It is not merely an instinct but a part of their vision of the good.

The orthodox Christian vision of the good is that goodness is exactly coextensive with the will of God. Humans do not create good and, except through God's grace, do not do good either. In the words of the 1801 articles of faith of the Episcopal Church, "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to God; . . . we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." For Christians the vision of the good is the faith-guided and Spirit-inspired vision of God's will. But Christianity, unlike liberalism, does not treat this vision as a choice. One does not *decide* to be a Christian. One is *called* to be a Christian. Christians differ sharply on whether mortals have the power to resist God's call, but Christianity has never taught that it is possible to become a follower of Christ if the call itself is absent.

The dedication to this worldview is created in Christian community. Parents who are serious about their Christianity consider it a responsibility to teach it to their children, not as one of several possible options but as truth. Nor are Christians alone in resisting the liberal idea that children should be raised to be neutral (as Rawlsian liberalism properly believes the state should be) among competing conceptions of the good. Few people want selves quite as unencumbered as many liberal theorists seem to propose. Such theorists as Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre have been forceful advocates for the proposition that there may after all be little value to the life lived in radical separation from others, in which all obligations are voluntary and all choices are available to be made.

Choice is not wicked. Choice is the essence of freedom, and liberalism has done more than any political idea in history to promote and protect it. Liberalism, however, is like neoclassical economics: a theory about the availability of choice without a theory about the virtue of good choices. It should not be surprising, then, that the liberal state has generated a market that produces all the gore and horror people demand. When the heavy metal group Cannibal Corpse sings about masturbating with the severed head of a murdered child, liberal theory possesses no tools with which to explain why such music is bad and is unable to accept the notion that people who derive utility from listening to such music should be discouraged from doing so. What religion provides, and liberalism by its nature cannot, is a mechanism for selecting among the available choices. The mechanism of choice is morality. If our day-to-day activities are unmediated by morality, the same market that produces the cars and shampoos and breakfast cereals that people want will also produce the child pornography, the blackmailers, and the Klan hoods that a morally unencumbered public might demand.

Most Americans, of course, do not want these things, and the reason is the operation of the moral sense, honed since childhood, that helps us to understand the difference between good and evil, even among choices we might legally make. And although it is possible to raise moral children without the aid of religion, few Americans are interested in making the attempt. Most Americans are people of religious faith, and most people of religious faith learn right and wrong with the aid of their faith. Liberal theory can explain neither why there are bad reasons to want a billion dollars nor why there are bad reasons to want an abortion, but the great majority of Americans would have no trouble identifying bad reasons to do either. For the Christian, the point is particularly sharp. There are no actions that I take beyond the sight of God and, therefore, no actions I take beyond the scope of moral judgment. "Everything that you do, do for the sake of God," wrote the Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides. The orthodox Christian teaching is identical: "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Even though this famous epigram may seem impossible to live perfectly, it nevertheless presents an approach to living, to understanding the good, that is sharply distinct from the self-seeking self of liberalism.

Systems of secular morality (if one rejects the contention of Hauerwas and others that the secular is a myth) can also provide reasons to choose among alternatives. But precisely because secular morality is not linked to any sense of the transcendent, its hold on human personality is often weaker than the hold of religion. I do not contend that the hold is always weaker, any more than I contend that religious moral systems always generate better choices than secular ones; history refutes that idea. I contend only that virtuous adult citizens could believe quite rationally (*pace* Hume) that their religious faith is the appropriate source of values to guide both private and public actions, and that a theory of the state that implies that it isn't will neither win, nor deserve, their adherence.

Liberal theory, of course, is a theory. It need not be psychologically accurate; it need not deal with people as they are, but can consider people as they should be. So when Stephen Macedo, for example, suggests that liberalism should set out to combat illiberal religions, we can take him quite seriously. He is uninterested in constructing the state for the benefit of the people. He would rather construct the people for the benefit of the state. That is the reason that liberal theory

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focuses so heavily on public education. The theory pretends that education will give children the tools they need as citizens, tools of critical analysis, for example. In practical operation, however, the liberal theory of education means competing actively with families for the privilege of creating meaning in the lives of children—more fundamentally, trying to wrest the children from the grasp of the religion of the parents, thus denying the putatively illiberal religion the opportunity to extend itself into the future.

In the Christian vision, children are to be raised not for the purposes of the state but for the purposes of God. "Train a child in the way he should go," admonishes the Proverb, "and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). And how are young Christians to be trained? For one thing, Christians are to focus their minds only on what is good and noble (Philippians 4:8). They are to be "living sacrifices," to resist conformity to the world (Romans 12:1-2). And they are, in the traditional Christian teaching, to die to self, to seek Christ rather than the fulfillment of their own desires. But in the liberal vision, the horizons of the traditionally trained Christian child must seem narrow indeed. And the agents of that illiberal constraint are the parents.

Small wonder that the schools are the great contemporary battlegrounds for the struggle over the role of religion, not only in our public life but in our private lives. This is not the place to recapitulate the sad history of the use of compulsory education laws as weapons for the destruction of religions opposed by the state, especially Roman Catholicism. Rather, I simply wish to note that the educational approach preferred by liberal theory, with its emphasis on critical skills that enable the child to choose what to believe, flies in the face of the traditional Christian understanding of family responsibility: the Christian child is trained to follow God's commands, not to question them.

What can one make of this? Simply that liberal political theory, for all its virtues, is woefully incomplete because of its persistent refusal to accept the force of religion as a genuine and vital expression of human personality. Few Americans see religious faith as an aberration in the way that many leading theorists of liberalism do. Few religious Americans (and most Americans are religious) will value a theory of the state that not only dismisses their most cherished beliefs from the public sphere but even tries, through the device of public education, to make it harder for those beliefs to function in the private sphere.

Yet there are obviously limits on how accommodating public education can be. In a multireligious democracy, it would be difficult, and sometimes wrong, for the schools to embrace traditional religious notions of right and wrong—at least if the embrace is explicit. Character education, for example, although generally popular among parents, leaves some evangelicals uneasy. How is it possible to teach moral rules, they wonder, if one fails to mention the source of all morality? This difficulty helps explain why so many parents support vouchers and other forms of tax support for private education. (Nearly four out of ten parents of public school children say they would put their children in private schools if they could afford to do so.) I do not think that vouchers, even for religious schools, pose any interesting constitutional problems. There is reason to believe, moreover, that the traditional resistance to vouchers among liberal policymakers is softening a bit. Even should we ultimately reject a system of school vouchers, the strong support for it suggests that the state has an obligation to ponder why its public schools, once the glory of our nation, are making so many parents so unhappy.

African Americans are particularly unhappy. Black Americans are among the nation's strongest supporters not only of vouchers to assist poor parents in purchasing private education for their children but also of classroom prayer, even more powerfully anathema to liberal theory. It is mere stereotyping to suppose that the reason for these data is simply that the public schools black children overwhelmingly attend do not do a good job at basic education, although that, sadly, is true. A better explanation, consistent with the rest of what we know, is that the data reflect the abiding evangelical Christianity that is the dominant faith within African America. Black Americans understand, often better than white Americans, the deadly danger in raising children without the aid of the tight moral cocoon that religions of genuine power can still offer. But this bit of unfinished business from the civil rights movement—assisting African Americans in the moral education of their children—is one that the liberal state cheerfully ignores.

Undeniably, religion can be dangerous to the basic human liberties of believers and unbelievers alike. But religion is not uniquely dangerous. The state itself poses a threat to basic human liberties, and the secular ideological wars of the twentieth century killed far more people than all the religious wars of history combined. Yet secular ideologies are not banned from the liberal public square because of their dangers.

Naturally, a liberal public order must set limits on what religion is able to accomplish through the legislative process—but it is not obvious why those limits must be different from the limits on what any other powerful force is able to accomplish. It is foolish, and fruitless, to try to assess the validity of a public policy according to the motivation underlying it, as the Supreme Court has too often tried to do. It is unwise, and perhaps unfair, for liberal theorists to single out religious motivations as

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belonging to the set of evil state motives, such as racial bigotry. Far better to assess the work of the state by what it actually does, so that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is perfectly acceptable in the liberal state even if, as the evidence suggests, many supporters considered it a religiously necessary piece of legislation; and organized classroom prayer is impermissible even if, as is certainly plausible, a school adopts it for a secular reason, such as the studies suggesting that people who pray regularly live longer, healthier lives.

What the liberal state should never do, however, is design a way of testing either the input or the output of the state that freezes out Americans like myself, people who believe that their understanding of God's word is the appropriate guide for both their public and their private actions. Certainly a state that freezes us out, or that demands that we pay for the privilege of having our children attend public schools that will seek to wean them from our faith, has no serious claim on our allegiance.

Little of this analysis is new. Critics of liberalism have made many of these points for years. Liberal theory, however, continues to be unwilling to accommodate itself to the systems of meaning preferred by the most religiously committed citizens of the nation. Instead, liberalism has grown ever more muscular, pressing theories about education and the public square that few religious citizens will ever support. That is a flaw in liberal theory, not a flaw in religion. For serious religion understands that the life lived without attention to the basic question is life not worth living. In traditional Christianity, discerning God's will and doing it is prior to everything else. If God's will is that we suffer, the Christian must suffer. If God's will is that we change, the Christian must change. If God's will is that we fight, the Christian must fight. Even when, in secular terms, the battle the Christian is fighting seems to be an appealing one, the Christian's motive for the struggle must always be to glorify God—and the Christian must never be afraid to say so.

That was the import of Fannie Lou Hamer's answer to Hubert Humphrey's awkward attempt to buy her off in 1964. Liberal theory can only find her response incomprehensible. Most Americans, however, would probably find it heroic. Fortunately for America. FT

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Flaubert and the Sin Against the Holy Ghost

Rodney Delasanta

Hope is the thing with feathers, Emily Dickinson wrote. Had she composed a longer poem or lived a longer life, would she have come to agree with Gerard Manley Hopkins, in "God's Grandeur," that "the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings"? Or would she have concurred with Flaubert, in *Un Coeur Simple*, that the Holy Ghost is really a stuffed parrot to whom simpletons, like his mockingly named heroine, Felicité, pray in their lunacy? From a poet who could lament in her last years that God's right hand "is amputated now / And God cannot be found," one cannot dismiss the latter likelihood.

Despair we have always had with us. Jesus warned against it in Luke's mysterious passage: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven" (12:10). St. Benedict sought to deflect it from the prayer life of his monks by enjoining them, in the seventy-second (and final) precept of his *Rule*, "never to despair of the mercy of God." And when St. Thomas Aquinas distinguished between presumption (the sin against hope by excess) and despair (the sin against hope by defect), he tagged only the latter as unforgivable.

Rarely in the history of Western literature—until the mid-nineteenth century, that is—has the virtue of hope been sinned against in any final and irretrievable way. This or that devastated character falling into despair, yes, like Lear on the heath, railing at the storm when turned out of doors by his daughters, or Gulliver preferring to sleep with his horses when returned to his Yahoo family; but in each case the despairer is an aberrant measured against exemplars of hope: Cordelia and Kent in the former, and Captain Pedro de Mendez, the spurned Good Samaritan of Gulliver's fourth voyage, in the latter. Even Ishmael, in Melville's darkest novel, is saved from the vortex of the doomed *Pequod* by Queequeg's coffin and by the whaler *Rachel* in "search after her missing children." How distressing to realize, then, that a deliberate and irrevocable violation of hope should have constituted the clear intention of the premier practitioner of the realistic novel, Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880).

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By Flaubert's time, of course, hope, coming after faith and before charity in the lineup of the three theological virtues, had undergone serious secular transformation. Certainly the Enlightenment had severed it from all eschatological promise; the provenance of hope to a Deist like Benjamin Franklin extended largely to the *civitas terrenis*, his kite and key the heavenly host, his street-swept Philadelphia the New Jerusalem. Later, the Romantics had tried to find hope in the countryside, but they presumed in the beneficence of Nature and in the innocence of the self. *Pace* Wordsworth, could any impulse from a vernal wood *really* teach "more of man, / Of moral evil and of good" than all the sages? And could anyone have been vain enough to obey the Emersonian injunction to "obey thyself," expecting thereby to touch the hem of the Transcendent? Flaubert thought not and said so with withering satire in *Madame Bovary*, his masterpiece.

For those who suspect that the catastrophes emanating from the Enlightenment have, over the slow pace of history, outdistanced its achievements, Flaubert's censure of the movement, via his mashing of the pharmacist Homais, seems just. Appropriately named, Homais is *man*—man alone—supremely confident in his own accomplishments and scornful of those

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superstitions, like primal falls and redemptions, that would compromise his newfound stature. Pompously self-reliant, he would cure the ills of the world by empirical fiat. It is from his apothecary's shop that the miracles of science issue and from his Comtean sagacity that uninvited dollops of the new morality are apportioned. His letters to the editor in the *Fanal de Rouen* dogmatize upon every conceivable subject: "There was no longer a dog run over, a barn burnt down, a woman beaten in the parish, of which he did not immediately inform the public, guided always by the love of progress and the hate of priests." He has named his sons Franklin and Napoleon. His poison helps to undo Emma Bovary long before she literally partakes of it from his laboratory, mockingly called Cafarnaum. He will outlast three doctors after Charles Bovary, "so effectively did he hasten to eradicate them." And for all this he will earn, as reward for his appalling career, the cross of the Legion of Honor. Hatred was the great spur to Flaubert's genius, and it is for the "enlightened" Homais that Flaubert reserves his singular contempt. Abandon all hope, ye who have presumptuously entered there.

Abandon all hope, also, ye who have succumbed to the siren call of Romanticism. By his own admission, Flaubert was in his youth addicted to the "disease" of Romanticism, and he wrote *Madame Bovary* as an act of self-exorcism. (He was supposed to have said, "Madame Bovary, c'est moi.") In the 1840s he wrote in a letter to his mistress, Louise Colet: "I am bored with great passions, exalted feelings, wild love affairs. . . . I prize common sense above everything else, perhaps because I so lack it." In another letter in which he complained about the sentimentality of Romanticism, he wrote: "I refuse to consider Art a drain pipe for passion. . . . No, no! Genuine poetry is not the scum of the heart," a metaphor that seems to mock Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." In its place, Flaubert sought, in his own words, "to render ignoble reality artistically." The "ignoble reality" he tried to render was the hollow and sordid society of his time, half of which he thought was sick with romantic self-indulgence (the inanity of the French nation returning another Napoleon to a recreated emperor's throne in 1852 is a case in point) and the other half with bourgeois acquisitiveness. Emma Bovary is the most pitiful victim of the illusions of Romanticism, and of acquisitiveness (although Frederic Moreau of *A Sentimental Education* would come in a close second), and the tragedy that issues from those illusions—perhaps pathos would be a better word—is the subject of Flaubert's great novel.

First among the Romantic "virtues" that Flaubert dissolves with his acidic realism, is *feeling*, Romanticism's vaunted mode of penetrating into the heart of reality: "I felt before I thought" was Rousseau's anti-Cartesian manifesto from his *Confessions*, just as in "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth exalted the role of feeling into mystical intuition. In Emma Bovary, Flaubert diagnoses feeling not as the salubrious power that Rousseau and Wordsworth extolled, but as a neurosis. Later in the novel, Emma's feeling degenerates into psychosis and arsenic-induced suicide.

Nature too was high on the list of Romantic ideals. Wordsworth might claim her as "the anchor of [his] purest thoughts, the nurse, / The guide, the guardian of [his] heart, and soul / Of all [his] moral being"; but Flaubert, writing his novel shortly after Wordsworth's death, could see in the landscape of his native Normandy only "a mongrel land. . . without accent or character." Sainte-Beuve, the great critic of French literature, said that Flaubert saw in the rural countryside only "pettiness, poverty, conceit, stupidity, routine, monotony, and boredom," a far cry from the quasi-pantheistic celebration of nature in "Tintern Abbey" or in Thoreau's *Walden*.

Sincerity was another Romantic "good," much praised by its greatest writers. But Flaubert in *Madame Bovary* is utterly scornful of its vaunted efficacy. He memorably belittles the sincerity of romantic love in the description of the agricultural fair when Rodolphe's protestations of love to Emma intermingle with the announcements of prizes for the best manure and the best hogs. No less contemptuous of Romantic sincerity is Flaubert's rendering of the scene, in the last moments of their affair, in which a love-weary Rodolphe squirts a few drops of water on his goodbye letter to Emma in order to simulate tears. Like the Romantics who died young with decidedly *outré* ideas about sex—Byron and Shelley in particular come to mind—Flaubert in his youth could lyricize about "the most beautiful of human words—adultery, [which is] vaguely enveloped with an exquisite sweetness." But by the time he wrote his masterpiece that "exquisite sweetness" had soured into disgust. Emma's tawdry adultery in the bumpy back seat of a hackney cab, with curtains drawn, making the rounds of Rouen in the middle of the day, was not what the Romantics had in mind.

If Flaubert could so vivisect Enlightenment and Romantic hope, he was even more pitiless in anatomizing the species of hope traditional to Christianity. Admittedly, he seemed to prefer the peasant virtues of the abbé Bournisien, who is not above laboring in the fields with his parishioners, to the intellectual posturing of Homais. However, when it comes time for the priest to offer the balm of Christian hope to a frantic Emma, totally disillusioned with her marriage to Charles, he too fails. Stirred to momentary piety by the Angelus, Emma seeks out consolation from Bournisien, who is

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about to teach the catechism to a group of recalcitrant boys. To Emma's complaint that "she is suffering," the priest can only respond with a tired formula from St. Paul which says that we are all born to suffer. Incapable of imagining any suffering in Emma beyond the gynecological, he wonders why her doctor husband hasn't prescribed an appropriate medicine.

Meanwhile, the unruly boys waiting for the lessons to begin get more of the priest's attention, and he deflects Emma's signals of despair: "I've known housewives who didn't even have bread to eat," he says. To Emma's rejoinder that "there are women who have bread but no . . . ," Bournisien interrupts by obtusely finishing her sentence with "fire in the winter." Further spiritual sparring yields no relief; the scene ends with the priest excusing himself in order to return to the catechism and Emma departing with the voices of Bournisien and his charges fruitlessly, mockingly, echoing in her ears: "Are you a Christian?" "Yes, I am a Christian." "What is a Christian?" "He who, being baptized . . . baptized . . . baptized. . . ." From such a ham-fisted sower of Christian seed, even the good ground would have sprouted thorns. What eventually follows is Emma's first adultery with Rodolphe.

Later in the novel, the assignation that Emma arranges with Léon in the Rouen Cathedral presents Flaubert with still another opportunity to disenfranchise Christian hope. For Léon, the cathedral's six centuries of architectural and iconic witness to the glories of Christianity serve only to frame Emma in a "a huge boudoir, the arches bending down to shelter in their darkness the avowal of her love." The intrusion of the verger, who stupidly assumes that the couple are tourists ripe for his packaged kerygma, briefly frustrates Léon's amorous strategies and briefly compromises Emma's initial resolve not to yield to them. The lovers' escape from his pedantic badgering is not made, however, without the verger's ludicrous, but ominous, insistence that on their way out they at least notice the sculptures of the Resurrection, the Last Judgment, Paradise, King David, and the damned consigned to the flames. For an aroused Léon and Emma, this is hardly the moment to dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; the couple flee Notre Dame de Rouen—the church of the Virgin, with its futile panoply of holy goads to virtue—and hail a hackney cab that will presently serve as their mobile cloister.

If Flaubert had ever read Alexander Pope's line that "hope springs eternal in the human breast," he summoned up all his narrative genius—in his description of Emma's death, wake, and funeral—to excise any remnant of it from *Madame Bovary*. The manner of her death is well known. In despair over her lovers' abandonment and hopelessly in debt, she commits suicide by devouring arsenic filched from Homais' Cafarnaum. At the vigil of her funeral, three characters, who represent the competing *weltanschauungen* in Flaubert's day (as the Karamazov brothers do in Dostoevsky's), engage in competition for the last word. Chief among them is Emma herself, around whom, even in death, the Romantic aura lingers. Despite early signs of putrefaction, the grief-stricken Charles can still gaze at her veiled form on the deathbed and romantically venerate "the watered satin of her gown shimmering white as moonlight. . . . It seemed to him that, spreading beyond her own self, she blended confusedly with everything around her—the silence, the night, the passing wind, the damp odors rising from the ground."

But when, desperate to blend once more with her himself, Charles performs the ultimate romantic act of lifting her veil, "He uttered a cry of horror that awoke the other two." The other two are Homais and Bournisien, who have spent most of the vigil in fruitless polemic. Voltaire, d'Holbach, the *Encyclopédie*, priestly celibacy, confession, the Jesuits—all become topics of wrangling between them. Yet the most telling moment comes wordlessly when, after "time and again falling asleep—something of which they accused each other whenever they awoke—Monsieur Bournisien sprinkled the room with holy water and Homais threw a little chlorine on the floor." Here, dark realism surrenders to even darker symbolism, for Flaubert renders the hopelessness of the human condition by an opaque epiphany: against the irrevocability of death neither Romantic dreams nor the pitiful talismans of religion and science can hold sway.

This may well be narrative art at its dazzling best, but the discomfited reader hesitates all the same to concede Flaubert his carrion-comfort despair. Some critics have read *Madame Bovary* as a moral, even didactic, novel because it demolishes the sordidness of a corrupt civilization. Yet because Flaubert's brilliant diagnosis of his sick society is unaccompanied by even the most modest prognosis for amelioration ("Ah, love, let us be true to one another," Matthew Arnold could plead in *his* moment of contemporary despair), it has also been read as an artful exercise in nihilism. For Flaubert closes his great opus, in the words of one critic, with neither a bang nor a whimper, but with a snarl. What he tells us is not only that the vicious prosper while the innocent suffer—no surprise there—but also that this Manichean rule brooks no exceptions. The meek clearly do not inherit Flaubert's scorched earth.

We know, of course, that Flaubert defended his art by appealing to its strict objectivity: "Nowhere in my book," he wrote, "must the author express his emotions or his opinions." Rather, he must remain detached and utterly impersonal, telling things as they

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really are and not as tender feelings would prefer them to be. But do his fictional chronicles of Toste and Yonville and Rouen in the 1840s tell things the way they *really* were? Flaubert's brilliant but self-serving line, now become a cliché, was that at this very hour his poor Bovary was suffering and weeping in twenty villages across France—to which the rejoinder might well be: Why does misery alone enjoy this privilege of universality? Should not its antinomies ask for equal time? Another village or two, somewhere, with a faithful Emma, a clever Charles, and an understanding curé? When reading Flaubert, should we not remind ourselves that at the other end of France, a year after the publication of *Madame Bovary*, Marie Bernarde Soubirous saw her astonishing visions at Lourdes? Did Flaubert, notwithstanding his genius, deliberately withhold some truths about the human condition?

Indeed, at those rare moments in the novel when Flaubert seems to relent and to crack open, ever so slightly, a Dutch door to hope, he quickly closes it again. Justin, Homais' adolescent helper who loves Emma from afar and whom she tricks into gaining access to the arsenic, is usually adduced as the best example of Flaubert's compassion. Yet his narrative carefully restricts Justin's love from connecting to anyone; it remains encaged, like the fenced unicorn. Only once is it noticed and even then it is cynically misunderstood: the grave digger Lestibudois, who secretly plants potatoes among his burial plots, spots Justin scaling the cemetery wall the night after Emma's funeral and decides that he has found the thief who has been stealing from his crop. Flaubert's mashing of the greedy grave digger in this scene trumps his compassion for the boy, whose love is sacrificed to the more compelling cause of high dudgeon.

One is moved to wonder: could not the author have sheathed his ironies this once and allowed Lestibudois to peek at Justin weeping over Emma's grave an instant *before* he scaled the wall? Similarly, after Charles dies and the remnant of his property is sold, was it not overkill to set the escrow at twelve francs, seventy-five centimes so as to guarantee that the impoverished orphaned daughter, Berthe, would be sent to work in a cotton mill? And how deeply would Flaubert's ironies have been compromised had he found a less wounding name than *Hippolyte* for the limping innocent who, through others' ambitions, suffered the amputation even of his clubfoot? Was it not gratuitously cruel to attach the name *Felicité* to the unhappy maid both of this novel and of *Un Coeur Simple*? Did narrative compulsion require that Charles' first wife, the widow Dubuc, "ugly, as dry as a bone, her face with as many pimples as the spring has buds," be named *Heloise*?

In an early short story, *Pigeon Feathers*, John Updike describes the adolescent fears of an innocent named David, who is precociously troubled by the inevitability and finality of death. At Lutheran catechism class, which he had valued as a Christian buffer to his dark thoughts, David is upset by his teacher, a young liberal pastor, who finesses the meaning of the Resurrection so as to deny its literal reality. He is further upset by his mother, who after admitting that she, too, in so many circumspect words, denied the Resurrection, casually asks him to take his new .22 rifle and rid the barn of pigeons that have rooked there. David reluctantly obeys his mother and shoots six pigeons, only dimly aware that by this act he too is somehow complicit in that killing of hope, the thing with feathers. It is a Flaubertian moment.

The story could have ended with this objective correlative unamended, and it would have if Flaubert had written it, but Updike—inspired perhaps by more orthodox Lutheran catechetics—recovers from this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost by allowing David the epiphany of examining one of the fallen birds before burying it: "He had never seen a bird this close before. The feathers were more wonderful than dog's hair, for each filament was shaped within the shape of the feather, and the feathers in turn were trimmed to fit a pattern that flowed without error across the bird's body. . . . And across the surface of the infinitely adjusted yet somehow effortless mechanics of the feathers played idle designs of color, no two alike—designs executed, it seemed, in a controlled rapture, with a joy that hung level in the air above and behind him."

Flaubert was incapable of such recovery. Four years before his death, and twenty after writing *Madame Bovary*, in ill health and beset by financial problems, he wrote *Un Coeur Simple*, a story in which he retrieved the name *Felicité* from his earlier novel and permitted himself a second chance to display his scorn. The story is a masterpiece, unquestionably, but Flaubert's scorched-earth strategies continue unabated. A simple-minded maid to Mme. Aubain, Felicité suffers a string of crushing losses throughout her life: an unfaithful lover, the death of her beloved sailor nephew, the death of her beloved young charge, Virginie, the onset of total deafness, the death of her beloved mistress, and—grotesquely climactic—the death of her beloved parrot. To cling to any vestige of hope, she has the bird stuffed and installs it on her shelf: "She enveloped him with a look of anguish when she was imploring the Holy Ghost and formed the idolatrous habit of kneeling in front of the parrot to say her prayers. Sometimes the sun shone in at the attic window and caught his glass eye, and a great luminous ray shot out of it and put her in an ecstasy."

Cruelty triumphs over compassion in this rendering of St. Teresa *manquée*. The story could only have been conceived and executed by a man who could write

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about himself thus: "I lead a bitter life, devoid of all external joy and in which I have nothing to keep me going but a sort of permanent rage, which weeps at times from impotence, but which is constant." The only relief Flaubert testified to was his art, his personal stay against confusion, but because he required it to bear the burden of his permanent rage it is variously antipathetic, unforgiving, vindictive, even vengeful against those who, like Felicité, would presume to hope. No less a critic than Jean-Paul Sartre called Flaubert's realism *spiteful*, and I am inclined to agree with an author who knew enough of spite—and of hopelessness. Sartre would never have phrased it thus, of course, but his is another way of saying that, materially if not formally, Flaubert sinned against the Holy Ghost.

In the last moments of *Un Coeur Simple*, that blasphemy crests. Felicité lies near death in the room above the courtyard where the Corpus Christi festival is being celebrated. The priest places the gold monstrance, containing the consecrated host, on the altar while the censers are "gliding to and fro on the full swing of their chains."

> An azure vapor rose up into Felicité's room. Her nostrils met it; she inhaled it sensuously, mystically, and then closed her eyes. Her lips smiled. The beats of her heart lessened one by one, vaguer each time and softer, as a fountain sinks, an echo disappears; and when she sighed her last breath she thought she saw an opening in the heavens, and a gigantic parrot hovering above her head.

One does not often encounter so exquisite an expression of unpitying contempt. FT

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Home Alone in the Universe?

Fred Heeren

As I first learned at a dinner table surrounded by new acquaintances, questioning people's belief in extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI) is like questioning their religious faith. Doubts are met with gasps. The fierce stares say not just, "We disagree," but "You have blasphemed."

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against curing cancer, heart disease, and AIDS, which advanced aliens could presumably do. I'd be fascinated to hear an alien's perspective on the meaning and purpose of life. I'm all for immediate solutions to our war/crime/poverty problems, which a mature society is supposed to have solved. I even think that receiving all these blessings from above may follow logically from contact with a civilization that's survived for millions of years. But I also think that astronomers are now in a position to know that our chance of achieving such contact is very small.

Nothing drives ETI faith like the Copernican Principle, the idea that we do not occupy a privileged position in the universe. Many regard this as a necessary axiom for the continued success of the scientific enterprise. The practice of science begins, we are told, with the assumption that we are typical, not exceptional. We can't scientifically study a sampling of one, after all. Moreover, history suggests that Copernicus began an unstoppable progression: the world's greatest modern thinkers proposed and then proved that the Earth is not the center of the universe, that the Sun is not the center, that our galaxy is not the center, and finally, that there *is* no center.

Copernicus gave us the theory to take the first step, and Galileo demonstrated its truth. Einstein gave us the theory to take the last steps, and Edwin Hubble's observations of distant galaxies convinced the world.

Astronomer Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA's Goddard Institute, calls Hubble's achievement "the last great step in the revolution of thought regarding mankind's place in the cosmos that had been initiated by Copernicus." But today's Copernican Principle proposes, not only that the universe does not revolve around the Earth, but that the universe does not revolve around *us,* either literally or figuratively.

Having proved that our planet, sun, and galaxy are typical, science has yet to settle the question about whether we ourselves are typical. We lack absolute certainty that we are not, in the most important sense, the center—until someone confirms the existence of intelligent beings elsewhere in the universe.

Yes, if you put it that way, Robert Jastrow agrees: the *final* step in the Copernican revolution has yet to be taken. But in my talks with him during the 1990s, he insisted that we are on the verge of taking it.

"I think that mankind is on the threshold of entering a larger, cosmic community," he told me during a visit to his home and then to California's Mt. Wilson Observatories, where he serves as Director. His words carried a kind of ecclesiastical authority, seeming to reverberate from the seven-story dome above him, the observatory he calls a "cathedral dedicated to mankind's quest for understanding of the Cosmos." Less loftily, he added, simply, "We'll be hearing from those guys soon."

Taking a seat on the wicker chair that Edwin Hubble had sat upon almost eighty years before, I pondered this possibility—and then promptly forgot it while playing with the controls that split open the ceiling to the night sky, that slued the 100-ton telescope across the room, that spun the entire cavernous structure around me.

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Sitting there a mile above Los Angeles at the focus of the world's largest telescope, positioned at the helm of the entire scientific enterprise, Hubble felt tremendous power. Oddly, he was simultaneously struck with a sensation of puniness, of being the first to fully understand how diminutive our place is in this enormous universe. While tweaking the controls over hundreds of cold nights through the early 1920s, Hubble provided photographic proof that our galaxy is but one of many. The nebulas, then understood to be wisps of gas among the Milky Way's stars, turned out to be more distant galaxies containing billions of stars of their own.

Now, having entered a new millennium, we're poised to make the final test of the Copernican Principle. And why should Robert Jastrow think our generation will be the lucky one to finally make contact, aside from the fact that his generation of astronomers can't die in peace until it happens? For one thing, new SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) telescopes and computers are being built with greatly enhanced sensitivity and coverage.

But Dr. Jastrow was thinking more about the signals we've been sending than those we hope to receive. "We're a very conspicuous part of the universe right now," he explained. "The TV and FM broadcasts—and the radar from our defense installations—are sending out a signal that there is life on this planet."

The SETI Institute's Robert Arnold agreed, saying: "These electromagnetic artifacts of daily commerce, entertainment, and defense give the Earth a distinct radio frequency signature that is brighter than the Sun."

According to Jastrow, "That started in intensity, at the million-watt level, about thirty years ago, in the 1960s." *Jack Parr* and *I Love Lucy* are at a wave front, he said, that's spreading out into the cosmos. "Within thirty light-years there are some dozens of stars. And if they got the word thirty years ago, they would be sending a reply back to us. And those who are only fifteen light-years away will have sent a message back fifteen years ago, which should just about be reaching us today."

Other astronomers belonging to Dr. Jastrow's generation recall the same kind of enthusiasm, but new concerns have since dampened it. "I used to rather enjoy thinking that the early civilizations would have set up an intercommunicating system," said Senior Astronomer Emeritus Eric Carlson of Chicago's Adler Planetarium. "Maybe laser beams or something full of information about all the other civilizations in the past history of the galaxy, and that this is all circulating . . . from star to star around the galaxy, and all we have to do is tap into it."

The actual likelihood that we'll hear back from anyone that close, of course, depends upon just how densely packed our galaxy is with civilizations—and upon how long those civilizations last. Today Carlson frets about what might happen to any civilization in the course of a ten-billion-year-old galaxy. What will be left of human culture in a billion years, or even a million? "I tend to get this sense of a galaxy as being sort of like a garden," says Carlson. "You have the early spring flowers, and then you have the late spring flowers and so on, and you have life with consciousness springing up here and there for a while. And whether it's ever in contact at the same time, I just don't know."

The next generation of cosmologists might still say that the existence of extraterrestrial civilizations is "extremely likely," as cosmologist George Smoot (Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories) told me. "But I think the chances of there being life *near* to us is pretty low," he cautioned, "and whether there's life in our own galaxy, besides ourselves, I don't know."

Among the youngest astronomers to make a name for himself is Charles Steidel, the Caltech leader of an international team to discover ways of viewing thirteen-billion-year-old baby galaxies. His thoughts reflect the addition of twenty-first-century biological understanding to the equation: "The chance of there being life with which we would be capable of communicating, I think, is fairly low, because there are so many ways that things could develop."

Even Robert Jastrow, who has proved more relentlessly upbeat about alien civilizations than any other astronomer with whom I've spoken, appears to have had some second thoughts. When I was about to go to press with a book on modern cosmology, he asked me to make a small addition to a statement he had made in my chapter about SETI. Instead of saying, "We'll be hearing from those guys soon," he wanted me to change it to, *"If life is common*, we'll be hearing from those guys soon."

Most people are oblivious to recent evidence bearing upon the ETI question, both pro and con. But the Copernican principle is firmly embedded in popular culture, understood in terms of "the awful waste of space" if aliens aren't out there. Any chatty taxi driver can tell you that there are billions of galaxies and billions of stars within each. The sheer numbers demand that there be millions of habitable planets in our galaxy alone, even if the percentage of tenantable star systems is small. To say otherwise is to expose one's lack of scientific education.

Contact is assumed to be not a matter of *if*, but *when*. Our movies have given us progressively better special effects to prepare us for a day when the Earth will stand still, when we'll experience *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, or when SETI will help us make *Contact*. Generation X and following have been entertained by more extraterrestrials than cowboys, Indians, and soldiers combined. It's probably not an overstatement to say that

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no movies have had greater influence on men under age thirty-five than the *Star Wars* films.

Infatuation with extraterrestrials further increased in the last decade. *The Rockford Files* became *The X-Files.* Mob-fighting Untouchables turned into alien-fighting Men in Black, also spun into a children's cartoon series. The biggest hit in late night radio is a national show that frequently features guests offering firsthand accounts of their close encounters with aliens or their spacecraft.

For some people, real life is apparently taking too long to catch up to their media-led expectations—and they aren't going to wait any longer. During the 1990s, psychologists estimated that in the U.S. alone 900,000 people claimed to have been abducted by aliens, and the trend was increasing. In his book *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind,* C. D. B. Bryan reported "the emergence of a new psychological disorder," observed in people who have been conditioned to look to "alien saviors" who might give them the fulfillment they aren't finding on terra firma.

Theoretical physicist Paul Davies claims that people are looking to extraterrestrials as "a conduit to the Ultimate." For many, the prospect of ETI has come to meet a need once met by religion. Even the SETI scientists say they are motivated by a nobler goal than the mere search for intelligence. Imagine, they say, the boost in knowledge, in morality, and maybe even in spirituality, to be gained from a billion-year-old civilization.

Robert Jastrow imagines what it might do to our present religions. "When we make contact with them, it will be a transforming event," he says. "I do not know how the Judeo-Christian tradition will react to this development, because the concept that there exist beings superior to us in this universe, not only technically, but perhaps spiritually and morally, will take some rethinking, I think, of the classic doctrines of Western religion."

Any signals we detect, according to SETI astronomer Jill Tarter, will come from long-lived civilizations. This fact, combined with the fact that religions cause so many wars on this planet, means that our first detected signals will come from beings "who either never had, or have outgrown, organized religion," she said at a recent science/religion meeting sponsored by the Templeton Foundation and held in the Bahamas.

Other scientists and theologians at the Nassau meeting thought that pantheistic religions could survive an alien encounter, but most assumed that Western religion would certainly meet its fate when meeting extraterrestrials. Science historian Steven Dick called SETI "a religious quest" that might help to reconcile science and religion. But he assumed this would occur at the expense of Christianity, which could not accommodate the implications of ETI.

It strikes me that today's scholars may be too quick to pronounce last rites over the faith that actually engendered most early ETI enthusiasts. Throughout the Middle Ages, well-read people believed that a "plurality of worlds" was impossible, following Aristotle's arguments. In 1277, a council of bishops in France condemned this position, officially opening the way for many to take other worlds seriously.

Whether encouraged or discouraged by their churches, prominent Christians became the most prominent ETI promoters. These included Giordano Bruno and Nicholas of Cusa (fifteenth century), Johannes Kepler (sixteenth century), American Puritan divine Cotton Mather (seventeenth century), and Yale president/minister Timothy Dwight (eighteenth century).

Whether aliens will deliver a knockout blow to any particular religion depends, of course, upon exactly what aliens have to tell us about God. Materialists have traditionally assumed that Jews, Christians, and Muslims, believing in a transcendent God, will receive bad news. And the Christian belief in Jesus' death for human sin seems particularly problematic to them. How could we reconcile Jesus' death for all with the existence of other intelligent creatures in the universe?

Christian ETI enthusiasts, however, have a variety of responses to the skeptics:

1) Jesus' atoning sacrifice was a one-time event that covers aliens too. Oxford cosmologist E. A. Milne suggested that missionaries will eventually be preaching the good news to far-flung galaxies.

2) Other civilizations may not have fallen into sin and so don't require salvation. Oxford don C. S. Lewis wrote science fiction fantasies about such alien societies.

3) God has become incarnate in the form of alien flesh in as many places where His creatures have fallen into sin. Scholars and rock singers have taken this position. And in the words of hymn writer Sydney Carter:

Who can tell what other cradle,
High above the Milky Way,
Still may rock the King of Heaven
On another Christmas Day?

Most ETI believers remain blissfully foggy about the best evidence to support their faith. Here are some of the recent scientific discoveries and trends I'd be sure to mention if I were to argue for the existence of ETI at my next dinner party.

• *Exoplanets.* The Copernican Principle came through once again by predicting that we should find planets orbiting Sun-like stars. Waiting all their lives for this

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discovery, astronomers finally received word of it in 1995.

Until very recently, no extrasolar planet had been observed directly, but rigorous measurements of the wobble in their host stars assured planet-hunters of their presence. The first exoplanets discovered appeared to belong to freakish solar systems, not only because the pinpointed planets were huge—as expected, since these are easiest to measure—but also because they were orbiting close to their parent stars, which was very unlike our expectation of finding solar systems like ours, with large, gaseous planets farther out. Our solar system is beginning to look like the freakish one.

Astrophysicist Virginia Trimble (University of California, Irvine) typified the consensus *before* these discoveries, writing: "It is not a coincidence that the solid-surfaced, terrestrial planets are close to the Sun and warm enough for liquid water, while the jovian (gas-giant) planets are in the outer, frigid reaches of the solar system." Using "common sense and computer models," she calculated that "the Milky Way probably still contains at least 10^{10} [that's ten billion] stars that could have harbored habitable, terrestrial planets for more than five billion years." Our actual observation of unexpectedly different planetary systems now forces us to rethink our views on the commonness of earthlike planets.

Exobiologists have dubbed the habitable belt where water can exist in liquid form around a star "the Goldilocks zone," because it's neither too hot nor too cold for life. Those exoplanets that have been observed spending any time in the Goldilocks zone merely pass through it. Their orbits are extremely elliptical, meaning surface temperatures fluctuate from hotter than Venus to colder than Mars. The very fact that these massive planets cut through the habitable zone in their elongated orbits ensures there can be no smaller, more hospitable planets in this system, since the giants would destabilize their orbits.

Teachers and students learned from *Science News*: "Recent discoveries of giant planets orbiting within spitting distance of their stars have upset a central tenet of astronomers—that Earth's solar system, where large planets orbit far from the Sun, provides the model for planetary development everywhere."

Of course, it's too early to tell by these methods just how rare our earth is. The technique is not yet refined enough to find smaller planets. Over the next two decades, NASA's Origins Program will be developing a series of space-based telescopes, hoping not only to detect the wobble produced by small, Earth-sized planets (2009's Space Interferometry Mission), but to measure the chemical signature of life itself (2012's Terrestrial Planet Finder).

In short, exoplanet discoveries probably provide the most important scientific gain in recent years to favor ETI existence, but this good news came at a price: the Copernican Principle cannot be applied so neatly to our own star system. Our solar system does not appear to be typical, and those that permit life, if they exist, must be the exception, not the rule—even among Sun-like stars.

• *SETI Strides.* New search instruments coming on line in the near future may dwarf all previous attempts to pick up signals from distant civilizations. The argument can be made that earlier searches just didn't have the coverage required—either in sensitivity, frequencies, or number of examined stars. And these shortcomings will shortly be remedied with instruments that are making great leaps in capability.

The SETI Institute of Mountain View, California, calls its main search Project Phoenix, the best-funded search ever. Unlike others, this project carefully searches star by star, listening only to the likeliest candidates within a radius of two hundred light-years. Project Phoenix has shuttled its Targeted Search System back and forth between the largest radio dishes in the world.

In September 2000, Microsoft's cofounder Paul Allen and his associate Nathan Myhrvold pledged $12.5 million dollars to the SETI Institute for the development of the Allen Telescope Array (ATA), a specially designed radio telescope that will be dedicated to the search for ETI. A small prototype is complete, and the full ATA, comprised of hundreds of backyard-type satellite dishes working together, is scheduled to come online in 2005. In the time it now takes Project Phoenix to survey 1,000 stars, ATA will examine 100,000, and might eventually scrutinize a *million* stars a year, looking out to 1,000 light-years or more.

"This telescope will do it," SETI astronomer Seth Shostak told me. According to Shostak, the ATA will scan so many stars with such speed that "even if we use the most conservative estimates about the number of civilizations out there, I think we'll find their signals within the next couple of decades."

Not wanting to wait that long, over three million volunteer enthusiasts are also partaking in the pursuit, either by joining a "distributed computing" network called SETI@Home, or by building their own radio telescopes as members of the amateur SETI League.

"It gets the heart pounding," says Shostak, anticipating the fact that we may soon be listening to alien wisdom. It's an experience several Silicon Valley legends are giving tens of millions of dollars to have. And amateurs are giving tens of millions of hours to try to bring us the experience sooner.

Some analysts of SETI projects argue that Project Phoenix is wasting its considerable resources on an outdated strategy. Nathan Cohen and Robert Hohlfeld, scientists at Boston University, point out that targeted search strategies assume that ET civilizations are much

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more abundant than recent observations allow. They favor scanning larger, star-rich areas of the sky, betting on the numbers rather than the long-shot chance of finding ETIs via nearby, star-by-star searches.

"Unless ETs truly infest the stars like flies (very unlikely)," write Cohen and Hohlfeld, "the first signals we can detect will come from very rare, very powerful transmitters very far away. The 1971 model, which lent too much weight to nearby stars, turns out to be a naive case, the best that could be calculated at the time."

• *Slow Strides in Space Travel.* Each new problem for space travel is a problem solved for SETI enthusiasts. Easy progress in our ability to zip around the solar system might imply our eventual ability to travel between the stars—and the ability of advanced aliens to do so. In that case, we shouldn't have to go looking for them; they should already be here.

But here we are, already past 2001, the year when, according to Arthur C. Clarke's trend-setting classic of science fiction, humankind would make contact with more highly evolved beings (or at least one of their artifacts). At the very least, by this time we were supposed to be doing manned missions to Jupiter's moons. Clarke's expectation in the 1960s was not unrealistic, considering the fact that our new space program went from putting the first man in orbit to the first man on the moon in just seven years.

So why was that first small step for man the last great leap to be made in twentieth-century space exploration? Each passing year that delays the planning of a manned Mars mission reminds us of the exponentially greater distances—and difficulties—as we try to reach objects beyond our Earth-Moon system. And so these difficult-to-cross distances may explain why we haven't been visited.

If the public knows little about the best reasons to believe in intelligent extraterrestrials, it knows even less about the new reasons to doubt.

• *Fermi's Paradox—Back in Style.* Fermi's Paradox, a SETI-challenge that was tried and found wanting in the 1950s, has been given a retrial. This time, expert witnesses on propulsion technologies have been called in, claiming that if life sprung up in our galaxy many millions of years ago, then our galaxy should have been entirely colonized by now.

It all started over a Los Alamos lab lunch in the summer of 1950, when renowned Italian physicist Enrico Fermi had one of those napkin-scribbling epiphanies. His conclusion stemmed from the indisputable premise that there are billions of stars in our galaxy that are older than our sun, and that life routinely develops under favorable conditions.

Exhausted planet resources and dying stars would provide good motives for exploration and homesteading. Some cultures, like our own, would find other motives for colonizing, and it would only take one enterprising population to begin exponential expansion. Fermi showed that, even assuming modest speeds, every habitable star system in the galaxy should have been colonized within mere millions, not billions, of years. Complete colonization could take place in the relative twinkling of a cosmic eye, many times over, in a ten-billion-year-old galaxy like the Milky Way. "So," asked Fermi, "where are they?"

Astronomers immediately developed solutions to the paradox, but as the years passed, each of these explanations has become problematic. Some suggested that perhaps the distances between stars are just too great for biological creatures ever to cross. But today, while still in our space age's infancy, physicists and engineers at NASA envision propulsion strategies that should reach 10 to 20 percent of the speed of light, making trips to the stars feasible, even for short-lived biological beings like us.

Figuring on a cruising speed of 10 percent that of light and periods of four hundred years' settling time between migrations, astronomers say it would take just five million years for one colonizing group to reach every star system across the Milky Way's 100,000 light-years.

In the 1970s, four astrophysicists—Michael Hart, David Viewing, Frank Tipler, and Ronald Bracewell—independently published studies concluding that the Fermi Paradox was difficult to escape. Today, as NASA lays the groundwork for new propulsion strategies, the thought that older cultures should have developed these long ago lends added weight to Fermi's argument. "The implication is clear," wrote British astronomer Ian Crawford last year: "The first technological civilization with the ability and the inclination to colonize the galaxy could have done so before any competitors even had a chance to evolve."

In the past, alien defenders turned to sociological factors that might have prevented interstellar travel. Perhaps aliens just don't like traveling. Perhaps civilizations routinely blow themselves up after achieving nuclear capabilities. Or perhaps, according to the "zoo hypothesis," our solar system has been set aside as a primitive nature preserve, not to be touched.

But even SETI Institute astronomer Seth Shostak is skeptical about these scenarios, writing in his book *Sharing the Universe*: "It isn't that we can resolve the Fermi paradox by arguing that *most* alien societies self-destruct or lose interest in expansion. *Every single one* of them must do so, for otherwise representatives of at least one society would be in our neighborhood."

Some of them, if not all, would have ample motivation to move when their host stars ran out of hydrogen

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and died. Hundreds of millions of solar-type stars in our Milky Way have already suffered this fate, turning any surrounding paradises into hells by puffing up into red giants or compacting into white dwarfs.

What are SETI proponents to do? Most have returned to pointing out the physical challenges of interstellar trekking. During the 1950s, astronomer Frank Drake decided that energy costs might make interstellar travel not just high-priced, but impossibly so. There's no guarantee that better propulsion systems are physically possible or that less costly energy sources can be tapped for higher speeds.

It's exactly here that believers in advanced ETI exacerbate the paradox. They invariably assume that the space-travel technology and energy resources of advanced technological civilizations will also be highly developed. After all, Carl Sagan and other SETI pioneers classified these advanced civilizations according to their abilities to harness the power of entire stars or galaxies. It doesn't sound like insufficient energy production would be the thing to hold back such societies from powering greatly increased transit speeds. In our own history, the cost of raw materials and fuels, relative to wages, has been dropping exponentially for the past 150 years. In 1983 Carl Sagan himself predicted that this trend would likely continue for another millennium.

• *New Analysis of SETI Results.* Recent analyses of radio search findings have only tended to put severe constraints on the numbers and types of possible alien civilizations.

At the first SETI conference in 1961, Frank Drake proposed a list of factors to quantify the technological populations expected to inhabit our galaxy. Drake's associates assigned values to the rate of star formation, the fraction of stars with planetary systems, the number of planets suitable for life, the fraction of planets where life develops, and the fraction where technological civilizations develop. By multiplying the terms together, they determined that there should be about one million societies using radio waves in our galaxy. The scientists assumed, conservatively, that perhaps 1 percent of the civilizations would not blow themselves up shortly after achieving nuclear capabilities. Others have since assigned higher values to this and other factors, and have arrived at an even higher number.

Drake's first project to search for extraterrestrial radio signals became the forerunner of more than seventy grander radio searches by teams around the world, using the world's largest radio telescopes and most sophisticated computer programs to analyze the data.

However, after what has now been forty years of null SETI results, astronomers are reexamining each of the factors making up the Drake Equation, concerned that the values of some may have been grossly overestimated. Charting the distances and radio powers that SETI projects have checked to date, Massachusetts physicist Andrew LePage has already determined which kinds of civilizations can be ruled out. These include nearby civilizations slightly more advanced than ours (called type I), as well as those at greater distances that are yet more advanced (called types II and III). "These are not trivial results," writes LePage. "Before scientists began to look they thought that type II or III civilizations might actually be quite common. That does not appear to be the case."

• *The Rare Earth Equation.* Today the Drake Equation is being superseded by the Rare Earth Equation, as it was named by geologist Peter Ward and astronomer Donald Brownlee, both at the University of Washington in Seattle. Since the Drake Equation depends upon the number of Earth-like planets orbiting Sun-like stars, Ward and Brownlee used the latest data to revise previous estimates concerning both—and to add many once-neglected factors, now known to be critical, to the equation.

These include the fraction of stars in a galaxy's habitable zone, the fraction of metal-rich planets, the fraction of planets with a large moon, the fraction of planets where complex animals arise (as opposed to bacteria or algae), and the fraction of planets with a critically low number of mass extinction events. In their 2000 book, *Rare Earth—Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe,* Ward and Brownlee remind their readers: "When any term of the equation approaches zero, so too does the final result." And they conclude: "It appears that Earth indeed may be extraordinarily rare." Here's why:

• *Special Gas Giant.* Jupiter-like planets that orbit close to their host stars, or that orbit eccentrically, refuse to politely share their space with smaller, life-harboring planets. Habitable planets need to make circular orbits within the "Goldilocks zone." Gas giants making eccentric orbits will eject smaller neighbors out of the system or send them crashing into their sun.

Well-behaved gas giants, like Jupiter and Saturn, keep circular orbits at a respectful distance. In that position, they actually serve the necessary function of cosmic vacuum sweeper, drawing comets and asteroids to themselves, rather than allowing them to hit us (as when Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 struck Jupiter in 1995). George Wetherill of the Carnegie Institution of Washington calculated that without Jupiter, comets would strike Earth between 100 and 10,000 times more frequently than they do, meaning that "we wouldn't be here."

• *Large Moon.* Habitable planets, it turns out, need to be members of a double-planet system, as some astronomers call our Earth-Moon system. Most people don't

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realize that our Moon is huge compared to the relative sizes of other moons in the planet-moon systems of our solar system. The Moon's mass creates a stabilizing anchor for the Earth, preventing the Earth from undue attraction to the Sun or to Jupiter, which would cause the Earth to tilt too far on its spin axis.

Discovering this, astronomer Jacques Laskar wrote: "We owe our present climate stability to an exceptional event: the presence of the Moon." Without an extra-large moon orbiting at the right distance from us, scientists predict that Earth would be subject to a runaway greenhouse effect, as on Venus, or a permanent ice age, as Mars would experience if it had more water.

Worse, most astronomers now think that the presence of the Earth's Moon is the result of a freak accident, perhaps a one-in-a-million shot, when a smaller planet hit the forming Earth with a glancing blow that allowed the mantles of each planet to combine and end up in orbit around Earth. "To produce such a massive moon," write Ward and Brownlee, "the impacting body had to be the right size, it had to impact the right point on Earth, and the impact had to have occurred at just the right time in the Earth's growth process."

• *Galactic Location.* As in the real estate business, location is everything. Stars located much farther from the galaxy's center than our Sun contain lower concentrations of heavy elements, necessary to form rocky planets like Earth. Stars much nearer the center of a galaxy reside in a denser neighborhood, exposing any orbiting planets to lethal radiation. Stars within a spiral galaxy's arms have the same problem. Most stars traveling between the spiral arms won't stay there, but our Sun is unusual for its circular orbit around the galaxy.

• *Plate Tectonics.* A hospitable planet needs a critical amount of radioactive elements, such as uranium, to produce the heat that generates a magnetic field. Without our magnetic field, the atmosphere would soon drift out into space. The radioactive core also fuels plate tectonics, the movement of the planetary crust across its surface. Of all our solar system's planets, such movement is found only on Earth.

Plate tectonics is crucial for life, and a string of other improbable factors, in turn, prove critical to the generation of plate tectonics. These include not only a radioactive core, but a crust of the right thickness and a mantle of the right viscosity, or flexibility.

• *Just-Right Crust.* A fortuitous assemblage of two kinds of crust are necessary, with different densities, in order to allow one to slide over the other, and to allow the lighter one to maintain itself above the water to produce stable continents.

• *Timing the Warm-up.* Exobiologists point out the necessity of a just-right host star, called a main sequence star. But main sequence stars increase their energy output over time, creating obvious problems for orbiting planets. In Earth's case, we now know that the era when the Sun heated up was timed to coincide with the era in which Earth's atmosphere gradually shifted from mostly greenhouse gases to the cooler mixture we enjoy today.

• *Biological Contingency.* Even if we assume that there are plenty of planets in our galaxy that meet the right conditions, and that life develops routinely on them, the most important question remains: How many of them will develop *intelligent* life? The majority of biologists and paleontologists say that evolution works without direction or a "ladder of progress." Instead, the history of life on Earth shows that the path of evolution depends upon a series of unpredictable events.

What were the odds that dinosaurs would be wiped out by an asteroid impact sixty-five million years ago, paving the way for us? What are the odds that the Cambrian explosion, when all the modern body plans appeared on our planet within a short interval, will happen on other planets?

Rare Earth's Ward and Brownlee conclude that, though microbial life may be common in the universe, complex life (even as complex as a flatworm) is not. The Cambrian explosion of forty new, widely separated complex animal groups, they believe, didn't have to happen. Darwinism doesn't predict such an event. And the fact that no new major animal groups (called phyla) have evolved in the 530 million years since should give us pause.

Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould views the intelligence of *Homo sapiens* "as an ultimate in oddball rarity." The fact that only one species out of an estimated fifty billion developed it on this planet after 3.8 billion years of life suggests that high intelligence may not be the most natural result in the course of evolutionary events.

"If intelligence has such high value," says Gould's Harvard colleague Ernst Mayr, "why don't we see more species develop it?" The list of leading biologists and paleontologists on record for defending this position is impressive, including George Gaylord Simpson, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Francois Jacob, and Francisco Ayala. British astronomer John Barrow notes that "there has developed a general consensus among evolutionists that the evolution of intelligent life, comparable in information-processing ability to that of *Homo sapiens*, is so improbable that it is unlikely to have occurred on any other planet in the entire visible universe."

Younger professionals in astronomy-related fields have also joined the trend. After writing an overview of

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what he calls the "bottlenecks on the road to intelligence," *Astronomy* magazine editor Robert Naeye concludes: "On Earth, a long sequence of improbable events transpired in just the right way to bring forth our existence, as if we had won a million-dollar lottery a million times in a row. Contrary to the prevailing belief, maybe we are special."

Ward and Brownlee tell us that if they're right about the rarity of complex life, then "there will be societal implications, or at least some small personal implications." They close their book with an appeal for Earthlings to stop causing extinctions, since we may be eliminating species, not only from our planet, but from the entire galaxy. An editor at the *Chicago Tribune* dutifully closes his review of their book with the question: "If we really are all alone in the universe, why aren't we taking better care of each other and this place?" So there's the moral to the story.

But what about those "personal implications"? Sure, it's fun to kick around speculations about aliens. But if intelligent life is so odd, the bigger question is, Why are *we* here?

In his book on extraterrestrials, British cosmologist and ETI enthusiast Paul Davies wrote that we have just three options when deciding why we're here: we either owe our existence to a very rare fluke, to unknown laws that make life a cosmic imperative, or to a miracle.

Davies rejects the fluke idea as the ultimate "just-so story." He rejects the miracle possibility out of hand, and warms up to the cosmic imperative notion. This gives him, he says, "a universe in which we're not alone." He hopes that perhaps we'll even find a billion-year-old society that will teach us how to solve all our problems. But if the evidence now points more plainly to the idea that we're not as common as flies, then it seems unwise to put our trust in a cosmic imperative.

In sum, we have no trustworthy principle to tell us what to believe about aliens. Worse, all three of our options for explaining life—laws, fluke, or miracle—require a leap of faith. This inference is a slap in the face to those who have put their faith in science.

The conviction that intelligent life is a cosmic imperative is not a scientific one, as we have seen, since actual data point in the opposite direction. Neither biologists nor astronomers see anything imperative about the many contingencies that had to be met, against all odds, for us to be here. Even Davies admits that the idea of laws slanted toward life and mind is "enough to make most biologists shudder," since it represents "a fundamental challenge to the existing scientific paradigm."

Though it strains our credulity, belief that we are a fluke at first seems more in line with modern science—until we realize that it runs directly against science's revered Copernican grain. What would Copernicus or Hubble say? Actually, Copernicus would not have subscribed to the principle that bears his name, since he remained unabashedly anthropocentric while believing that the Earth orbited the Sun. And Edwin Hubble should be credited, not only for taking the final step in the Copernican Revolution, but for putting the kibosh on it. Shortly after discovering that our galaxy is one of many, he discovered that all the galaxies are fleeing from one another, demonstrating an expanding universe. Scientists had preferred to think of our epoch in time as a typical slice out of a changeless eternity, but their eventual acceptance of the big bang meant that our universe has changed over time. Our era turns out to be a special one that permits carbon life, contradicting the Copernican Principle that there should be nothing special about our time or place.

In their classic book *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, astrophysicists John Barrow and Frank Tipler call this discovery "the first failure of the Copernican Principle." And as we've seen, the Copernican Principle failed again by predicting that our solar system would provide a model for most others.

The principle Barrow and Tipler prefer, of course, is their Anthropic Principle, which doesn't try to explain away our privileged place or time, but instead says that the features of the universe are constrained by the need to permit observers like us. The less delicate way to put this is to say that the universe appears to have been finely tuned in its fundamental force strengths, particle mass ratios, etc., for our benefit.

Most scientists dislike the direction the Anthropic Principle points them, not just because it implies God as an easy answer, but because, once again, it commits heresy against Copernican dogma. "It seems to me a sort of hubris to think that God made the universe just for us," said cosmologist George Smoot. "It seems to me, I'd just make the universe full of life."

Theoretical physicists such as Stephen Hawking have spent much of their energies looking for better explanations for the many anthropic "coincidences," seeing red flags go up with each violation of the Copernican Principle. But surely there must be a deeper reason for choosing one principle over another. Hoping to learn it, I asked Stephen Hawking himself. What disturbs him most about the Anthropic Principle? "The human race is so insignificant," he told me, "I find it difficult to believe the whole universe is a necessary precondition for our existence."

Maybe that's all there is to it: his fundamental lack of belief in our significance. Such disbelief comes easy for most people trained in science. We can't be that important. Why waste all that space? The movie *Contact* had its characters raise this favorite SETI point three times. After all, we Earthlings don't need all those other galaxies. "Clearly the solar system is necessary," continued

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Hawking, "and maybe our galaxy, but not a hundred billion other galaxies."

However, Barrow and Tipler point out that we little Earthlings actually do require all that extra legroom. They argue that the universe has to be as large as it is to host even one lonely outpost of life. Why? A stable universe with gravity must be expanding, or it will collapse. An expanding universe naturally becomes huge during the time required for stars to slowly cook the heavier elements necessary to constitute life. By the time the first stars finish their life cycle, making life's ingredients available through supernovas, the cosmos will necessarily be huge, whether it houses one population or billions.

As long as George Smoot and Paul Davies brought the possibility of God into this, what about that "miracle" option? "Miracle," as I take it, doesn't have to mean magical or instantaneous—but the word is up front about its demand for a nonphysical explanation. As Edwin Hubble's protégé, astronomer Alan Sandage, told me: "We can't understand the universe in any clear way without the supernatural."

Physicist James Trefil concluded his book about extraterrestrials and the conditions for life with the statement: "If I were a religious man, I would say that everything we have learned about life in the past twenty years shows that we are unique, and therefore special in God's sight." Not being a religious man, apparently, he declined to make the leap.

Personally, I've never thought of myself as making a *leap* of faith, at least, not a leap that was any greater than the alternatives. If we do take this confluence of just-right conditions the way they sound, like someone had us in mind all along, then we don't need aliens to keep us from being alone. Two-way communication with an Extraterrestrial Intelligence may indeed be available in our lifetime. Even better than appreciating our rarity, contact with our Superintelligent Creator could truly motivate us to take "better care of each other and this place."

Theistic believers have the same options as everyone else. Their alternatives are not restricted to faith in aliens or faith in God. If both exist, then the real question about aliens reduces to: Did God want separated creature groups to communicate with each other, or did He set them up so that they would develop independently?

Pleading ignorance but desiring knowledge, all of us can and should remain open to these various possibilities. But given what we can know for now, we have little reason to hope for answers from ETI in our lifetime. We'll have to solve our problems with war, crime, and poverty for ourselves, while also making up our own minds about the purpose of life and seeking another "conduit to the ultimate." FT

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Books In Review

Lewis Reimagined

C. S. Lewis Then and Now. By Wesley Kort. *Oxford University Press. 224 pp. $25.*

***Reviewed by* Alan Jacobs**

Wesley Kort's *C. S. Lewis Then and Now* is extraordinarily puzzling. It contains many fresh and valuable insights about Lewis, but my overall response is to wonder why Kort would choose to enlist Lewis in a project of cultural restoration that seems thoroughly alien to Lewis' whole body of work. Again and again Kort downplays, or explains away, those features of Lewis' thought that have endeared him to his evangelical and conservative Catholic fans; he works fervently to make Lewis' "mere Christianity" something less robust and (in Lewis' word) "pungent" than seems at all fair. All this in an admirable cause, in that Kort rightly wishes to claim that Lewis is important and valuable to Christians—and indeed many non-Christians who are concerned with the current direction of "literary culture." But it simply will not do to enlist Lewis in the armies of either Matthew Arnold or Richard Rorty, and that is ultimately what Kort tries to do.

The fresh insights of this book and its puzzlements both stem from Kort's determination to "retrieve" Lewis from the relatively small number of enthusiasts who, in Kort's view, dominate our picture of Lewis: his work's "appeal remains concentrated in the homes, offices, and institutions of conservative Protestant Americans, academic and lay." For Kort, "It would be unfortunate if that limited concentration continued." He repeatedly warns that Lewis cannot properly be enlisted in certain theological causes, especially three: those that emphasize the rootedness of Christianity in communities of the faithful (Kort mentions George Lindbeck, though perhaps Stanley Hauerwas would be a more appropriate figure); Barthian thought, with its rejection of natural theology and therefore of a major role for culture in shaping the Christian life; and evangelicalism.

What all three groups have in common, as Kort construes them, is the tendency to "set apart," to see Christianity as in some way opposed to other faiths, practices, and beliefs; or, to put it in another way, the tendency to emphasize what is specific to Christianity, what distinguishes it from other ways of thinking. Kort says that Lewis cannot be enlisted in the evangelical cause because evangelicalism means cultural separatism, but this is to ignore the crucial fact that evangelicalism as a movement arose in response to and as a counter to the separatism of fundamentalism. Indeed, Lewis is so revered by evangelicals precisely because he so wonderfully embodies a non-separatist, culturally engaged Christianity.

Kort, by contrast, wants to think of Christianity in terms of relation, mediation, connection—Christianity as that which brings together, and, centrally, brings *people* together. Through much of the book I thought Kort was saying that Christianity enables us to get along, but I discovered at the end that that would be to grant Christianity a larger role than Kort allows. In any case, if you deny Lewis to the three groups whose separatism Kort criticizes, and if you assume that Lewis is not a Catholic, what's left?

It's not easy for me to answer that question, though if I were forced to offer a label analogous to the ones Kort uses, I would probably say "mid-twentieth-century Protestant liberalism." But such labels have limited usefulness, so we would do better to look more closely at the key concepts that govern Kort's interpretation of Lewis. Three terms recur throughout this book, and together they go a long way towards describing Kort's project. The first term is "relation": for Kort, what culture and religion both do, when functioning properly, is to "relate people adequately to reality" (presumably this includes God) and to each other. The second key term is "mediation," and it describes the means by which culture in particular performs its great task: "The role of culture [is] as a mediator between religious beliefs and the entities and events of ordinary experience." Religion of course also mediates between human beings and the Divine. Kort's third key term is actually a phrase: "a Christian account of the world." For him, this seems to be primarily what Christianity does: it provides an "account" of how things and people are, or should be, related to each other.

About those elements of Lewis' work that consort with these three themes, Kort has interesting and new things to say. For instance, in what is perhaps the best chapter in the book, titled "Houses," Kort demonstrates that the large, rambling, complex houses in Lewis' writings (as represented in his fiction, and, as metaphors, in his apologetic writings) serve to create a powerful image of our culture as a diverse and yet coherent place in which to dwell. More generally, Kort is strong on those elements of Lewis' thought that rely on what Lewis (with his fondness for medieval formulations) would have called the "rational virtues," because these elements do not require the invocation of any specifically Christian doctrines. (Kort wishes to avoid these, for reasons I will later explain.) Thus, in a chapter on "Reenchantment," Kort explores with real force and sensitivity the ways in which Lewis' work

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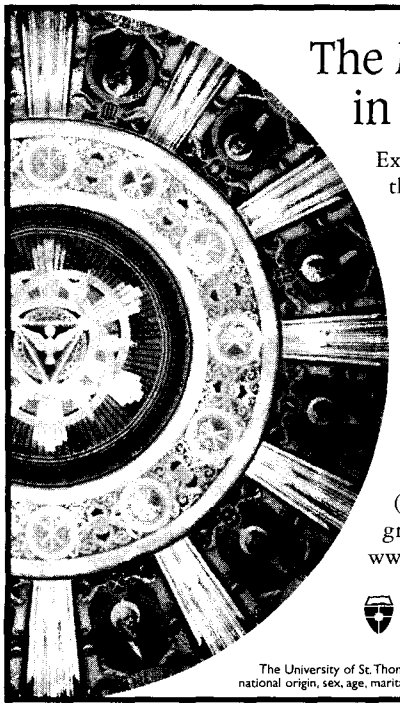
repeatedly explores the dangers faced by people who have accepted "the disenchantment of the world" (as Max Weber famously called it) and who are therefore vulnerable to the promises of "false enchanters." Lewis' diagnosis of this vulnerability does not require him to invoke any uniquely Christian beliefs, because such a critique can be conducted in more general moral and psychological terms. With Lewis the moralist Kort is often at home.

But not always; and at heart, perhaps, not at all. In his treatment of *The Abolition of Man*, for instance, Kort expresses discomfort with Lewis' insistence on the universality and self-consistency of natural law, or what he calls the Tao—perhaps because this seems to exclude those who would disagree with the Tao, which indeed it does. As Lewis writes, "An open mind about the foundation either of Theoretical or of Practical Reason is idiocy. If a man's mind is open on these things, let his mouth at least be shut. He can say nothing to the purpose. Outside the Tao there is no ground for criticizing the Tao or anything else." But Kort seizes on the one brief passage where Lewis admits that the Tao can change over time and from culture to culture, though only in the sense of internally coherent development.

Now, Lewis is extraordinarily careful with his discriminations on this matter. Moreover, he ends his book with several pages of quotations from the world's great religious and moral traditions to show that they all speak with a single voice on key moral issues. Such unanimity even leads Lewis to speculate that there has only been a single "civilization" in the whole of human history. But from all this Kort is led to claim that Lewis' view of morality allows more or less equal room for change and continuity—that for Lewis "the Tao, that is, the specifically moral content of culture, changes," and further, that "values endure, but they are not eternal." Leaving aside a variety of questions—for instance, whether Lewis would accept the redescription of what he calls "the Natural Law" as merely "the specifically moral content of human culture"—one could simply point out that to describe Lewis' views in this way is to run directly counter to the entire and explicitly stated purpose of *The Abolition of Man*.

ONE MAY FIND oneself asking why, exactly, Kort would want to work so hard to enlist Lewis in a project so at odds with some of Lewis' most deeply held ideals and convictions. A clear answer to that question finally comes in the book's conclusion. There Kort notes the manifold social problems stemming from, or at least associated with, the fact that "American life is now marked by greater and more sharply defined cultural diversity than ever before," and notes that our problems "seem to overwhelm the moral imagination and its capacity to propose more equitable and spiritually enhancing possibilities." (What these "possibilities" might be Kort does not spell out, though he does link them with a concern for "social justice.") What awaits Americans, in Kort's view, is a great task of "cultural reconstruction" that we can best approach by taking a "Lewis-like" attitude towards our problems. By "Lewis-like" Kort means, to put it simply, an emphasis on what we have in common, rather than what separates us: mere Americanism, as it were.

Kort's key assumption, then, is that if Lewis, as a Christian layman writing about his faith, emphasizes the beliefs that all (or most) Christians share, an American cultural critic is therefore "Lewis-like" if he or she emphasizes the beliefs that most Americans share. The assumption strikes me as highly dubious on several levels. I am not sure that a Christian layman's explanation or defense of his religious beliefs is really very similar to a cultural critic's concern to strengthen social unity in America. I am not sure that beliefs about God have the same form, structure, or import as beliefs about what makes for a healthy political culture. And I see no reason to think that Lewis' emphasis on mere Christianity—to which he felt called, but did not think every Christian to be called—would have led him to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take a similar attitude towards the proper role of a subject of the British crown.

In the end, then, Kort's appropriation of Lewis is so strained that almost all of the substantive content of Lewis' writings has to be left behind. There are few references to God in this book, almost none to Jesus Christ, and only a handful of the key doctrines and practices of the Christian faith receive any mention at all. This seems to be intentional on Kort's part, for in his conclusion, he imagines the project of "cultural reconstruction" going pretty far before Christians allow themselves the luxury of talking about anything distinctively Christian: "When that culture has begun to restore our humanity, Christians can then turn to the large task of giving a more specifically Christian account of the world and recommending it to their nonreligious neighbors as coherent and revealing."

For Kort, even being theologically reticent in this way—to the point of vaporousness—is "Lewis-like." At the outset of his book Kort dismisses the "theological content" of Lewis' work as being far less "arresting and useful" than Lewis' ability to help shape "a context or ground for talking about religion and morality effectively and truthfully"—certainly an arguable claim, though I do not quite agree with it. But Kort goes too far when he claims that Lewis himself did not think the theological content of his work very important, since "by his own admission" it is "rather standard and minimal."

Certainly Lewis would have agreed that his theology was "standard"—he often disavowed any theological originality, and this indeed is the point of his appropriation of Richard Baxter's phrase "mere Christianity." But minimal? Hardly. Lewis contends that this "plain, central" Christian faith, when examined closely and historically, "turns out to be no insipid interdenominational transparency, but something positive, self-consistent, and inexhaustible." How that description can be reconciled with Kort's "minimal" beats me.

It is therefore hard, for me at least, to imagine Lewis having much sympathy for Kort's explicitly non-Christian project of cultural reconstruction. Lewis certainly believed in the *anima naturaliter Christiana* (the person who has a "natural" Christian spirit)—indeed, in his fiction he created just such characters (Emeth, from *The Last Battle*, and especially Psyche, from *Till We Have Faces*)—but it is clear that he believed such persons to be exceptional, and did not expect any human culture, even the very best, to have the power to "restore our humanity." If he did believe that culture has such power, it becomes hard to explain why he would write that "it is when I turn to Christ, when I give myself up to his personality, that I *first begin* to have a personality of my own" (emphasis added). It is still harder to explain why he would say that "I think we can still believe culture to be innocent after we have read the New Testament; I cannot see that we are encouraged to think it important."

For Lewis, Christianity offers something far more comprehensive, powerful, and personally demanding than "an account of the world"—the sort of thing that a culture might offer. As he puts it quite simply in *The Four Loves*, "We were made for God," and the mere existence of his large and varied set of writings devoted to the exposition of this conviction is sufficient to indicate that he would have seen little value in waiting until, by our own earnest efforts, we had undone much of the damage of the Fall before talking publicly about the God for whom we were made.

One can quote many other passages from Lewis that would set him clearly in opposition to this pragmatic project of social renewal, in which Christianity seems to be but a possible instrument, and even then only at a fairly late stage of the scheme. To this Kort might well reply that he has shown, by his quotations, references, and analyses, that Lewis offers us far more than his evangelical and conservative Catholic adherents have made out. And this is true; but it is not helpful to replace one limiting picture of Lewis with another one that is thoroughly reductive. It turns out that, if (as Kort argues) Lewis is a more comprehensive mind than his typical supporters think, he is, equally, more comprehensive than Kort is able to show. Just after George Sayer's first meeting with Lewis—who was his tutor at Oxford—he bumped into one Professor Tolkien. Tolkien told Sayer, "You'll never get to the bottom of him." It seems to me that none of us has managed that trick, even now.

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The Secular Gospel

IRELAND'S HOLY WARS: THE STRUGGLE FOR A NATION'S SOUL. By MARCUS TANNER. *Yale University Press. 384 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* David Quinn**

IN SAYING THAT Marcus Tanner's *Ireland's Holy Wars* is predictable I don't want to give readers the impression that it is a bad book, because it is not. Its topic is five hundred years of religious strife in Ireland, from 1500 to the present. It is readable, well-researched, and has the journalist's eye for the telling anecdote. The author is former foreign editor of the London *Independent.* He appears to have an interest in parts of the world torn by religious strife. His previous book, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War,* was, like his current one, an account of how religious division forms national identity.

Tanner does not come down on either the Protestant or the Catholic side in his book, but he probably doesn't deserve much credit for this because it is doubtful whether such a temptation existed for him in the first place. Tanner views Ireland through the lens of the liberal Enlightenment. It is not hard for such a person to avoid taking sides between Catholicism and Protestantism since he will be attracted to neither of them.

At the same time, and to be fair, Tanner does not rage against religion. He doesn't want to see it crushed. It will do to tame and domesticate it. In other words, he is fairly moderate in his secularism. Unfortunately, though, his choice to view Irish history through this lens makes the book predictable. Most books about Irish history, culture, and society these days are written from a secular, liberal standpoint. In this view, Irish history provides ample confirmation that religion is mainly a source of intolerance, hatred, and violence.

It is Tanner's central thesis that the main cause of the conflict in Ireland is religious rather than political. This is presented as though it is an original thesis, a revelation, but it is strikingly unoriginal. It is also highly open to question because the conflict in Ireland between rival identities predates the Reformation. Even before then, Ireland was engaged in a struggle to prevent its separate identity and culture from being destroyed by England. Parts of Ireland were already being settled by England before the Reformation, and this resulted in tensions between Catholic Englishmen on the one hand and Catholic Irishmen on the other. The Reformation added considerably to these tensions, but even if it had not occurred, there still would have been a deep division between English settlers and their descendants and the native Irish.

This tension would have existed quite independently of religious considerations because while one group would have wished to live under the English crown, the other group would not. In Northern Ireland today, the main cause of tension is the irreconcilable wish of the Catholics to live under the Irish flag, and of the Protestants to live under the Union Jack.

In commentary on the Northern conflict, the word "nationalist" is often used in place of "Catholic," and "unionist" in place of "Protestant." This is fitting, because it indicates how the conflict is at least as much about rival nationalisms as it is about rival religions. One group wants to become part of the Irish nation, while the other wishes to preserve the union of Great Britain and Ireland. Take out religion, and this fact remains.

After all, if religion were the main source of the conflict then one might wonder why the leadership of the

DAVID QUINN *is editor of the* Irish Catholic, *a columnist for the* Sunday Times *(Ireland edition), and a broadcaster.*

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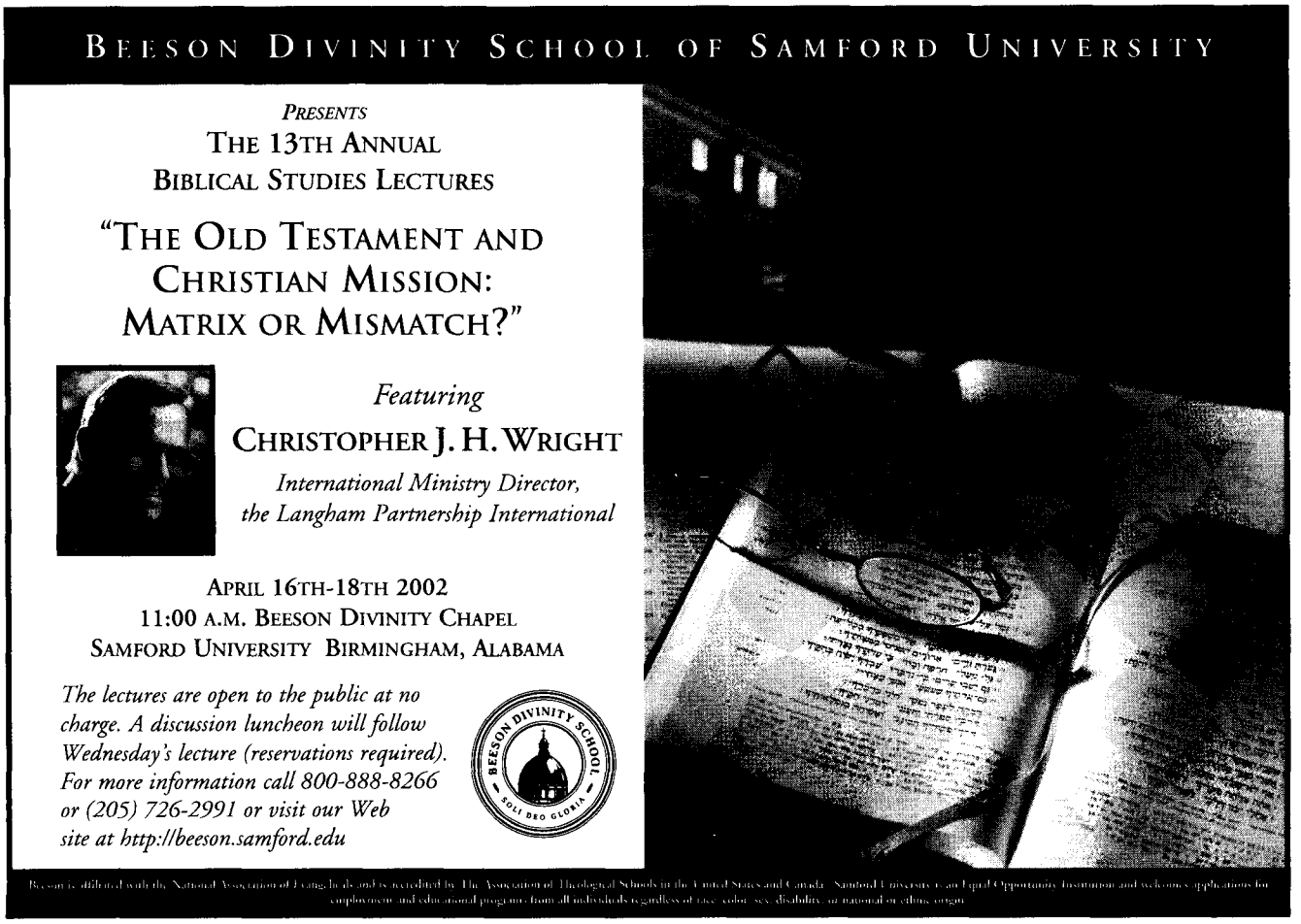
nationalist community has not wavered in its cause while it has become more secular. In fact, within the fiercely nationalistic IRA and Sinn Fein there are many people who are avowedly anti-Catholic and always have been. On the Unionist side there are also secularists in positions of leadership, and their allegiance to the Crown is no less strong for that.

Even if Northern Ireland became as secular as Sweden, there would remain a conflict of national identities. Meanwhile, south of the border, the process of secularization is already far advanced. Tanner presents this process as being, on the whole, a good thing. Not that he is explicit about it. He simply takes it for granted that the loosening of the Catholic grip upon Irish life has been a positive development.

His narrative runs roughly as follows. Following independence in 1922, the Republic of Ireland became a confessional state. The Constitution recognized the "special place" of the Catholic Church in Irish society. Politicians paid obeisance to the bishops and to Rome. Famously, when a left-leaning government was elected in 1948, it felt obliged to send the Pope a message assuring him that it wished only "to repose at the feet of your holiness." Protestants were required to know their place, and the Church controlled almost all elements of civil society. Freedom of thought was discouraged, and books were censored. Enemies of the Church were ostracized or crushed. Bit by bit, with the advent of television, the opening up of Ireland to the world, the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, and the clerical scandals of the 1990s, the Church was chopped down to size.

This narrative has a hero, the Socialist Minister Noel Browne, who served in the aforementioned government of 1948, and a villain, Dublin's long-serving archbishop, Dr. John Charles McQuaid. McQuaid worked tirelessly to maintain the power of the Church in Ireland, and Browne worked equally hard to break it. Although it is the case that in one famous clash between the two Browne was forced to resign as Minister for Health, in the long run it was Browne's view of the proper place of the Church in a secular republic that prevailed.

What this narrative tends to ignore is that if Ireland was indeed a confessional state post-1922, this is because the vast majority of people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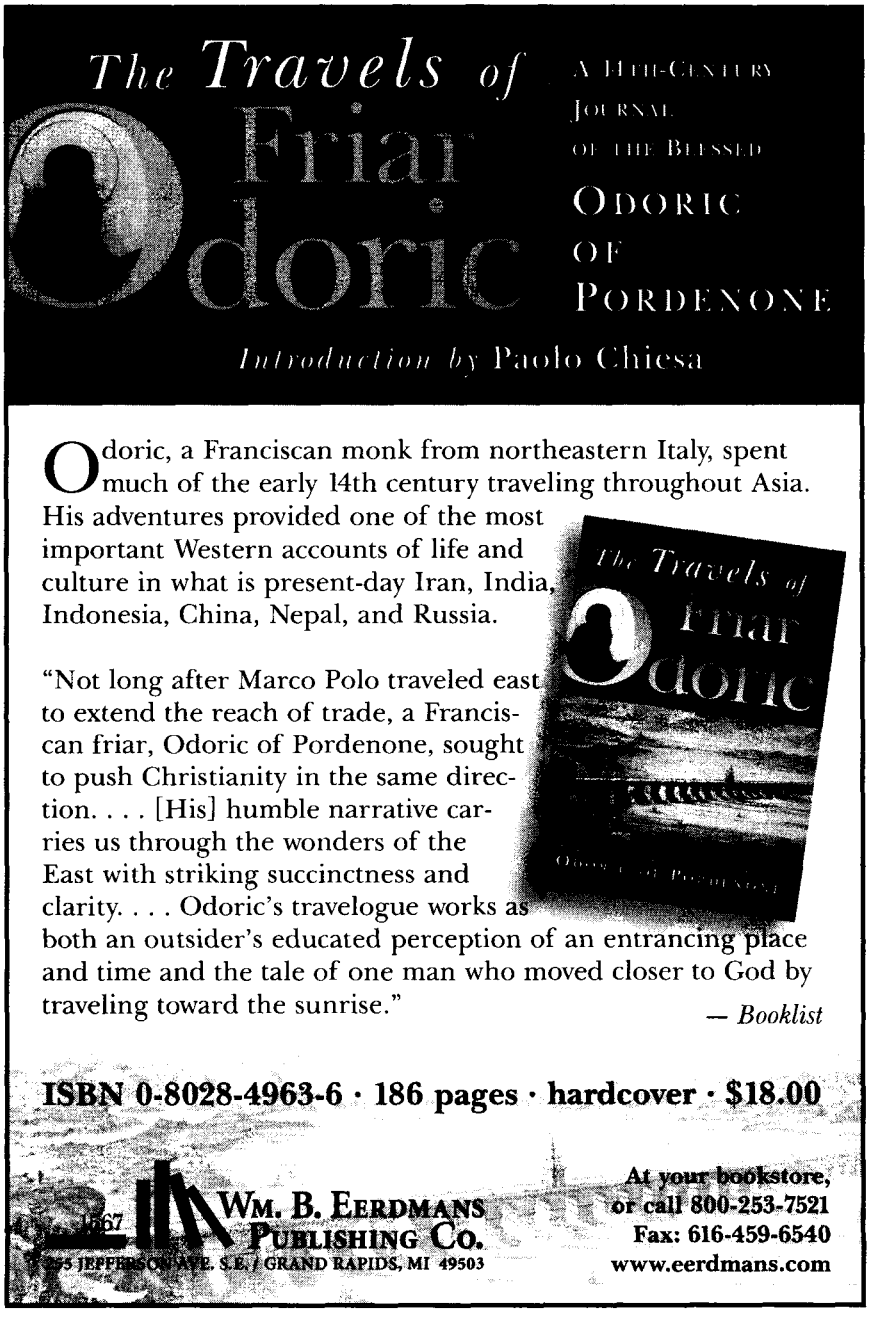
wanted it that way. The dominant role of the Church in Ireland was not some kind of alien imposition. At one level it enabled Ireland to tell the British that they had failed to make them conform. As the years passed, people felt less need to assert their independence from Britain by aggressively asserting their Catholicism, and so the power of the Church waned. The Irish people became willing to listen to other voices, including and especially voices critical of the Church.

The irony is that Irish culture is today increasingly a blend of America and Britain. We may retain political independence (although that is being increasingly ceded to the European Union), but our cultural independence has already been all but lost. A further irony—and it is lost on Tanner—is that the old Catholic monolith has been replaced by a new, secular one. This new secular orthodoxy is by no means accepted by all the people of Ireland. But it is accepted by almost everyone of influence, as well as by the urban middle class and most young people. The new orthodoxy clothes itself in the virtues of tolerance and pluralism, and presents itself as a reaction against the intolerance and closed-mindedness of the past.

AN EVEN GREATER IRONY is that this new secular orthodoxy is much more like the old Catholic orthodoxy than it might care to think. It is as intolerant of dissenters, for example, and arguably more so. Today, anyone who defies the politically correct nostrums currently in fashion risks being attacked on radio, television, and in all of the major newspapers. Such a person will be pilloried and made an object of contempt. Recently, a priest who called Islam a "heresy" was attacked on consecutive days on a popular talk-back radio show. The power of the crozier has been replaced with the power of the microphone and the printing press.

Secular Ireland also canonizes its heroes in the way Catholic Ireland once did. Biographies of Noel Browne and our former president, Mary Robinson, read like Lives of the Saints. Those it hates, like John Charles McQuaid, are demonized. In addition, modern Ireland has its equivalent of Rome. If former generations of politicians reposed at the feet of the Holy Father, most of the current generation are happy to kneel at the feet of Brussels. EU statements are treated with the greatest reverence, and it is taken as a sign of virtue to meet with its approval.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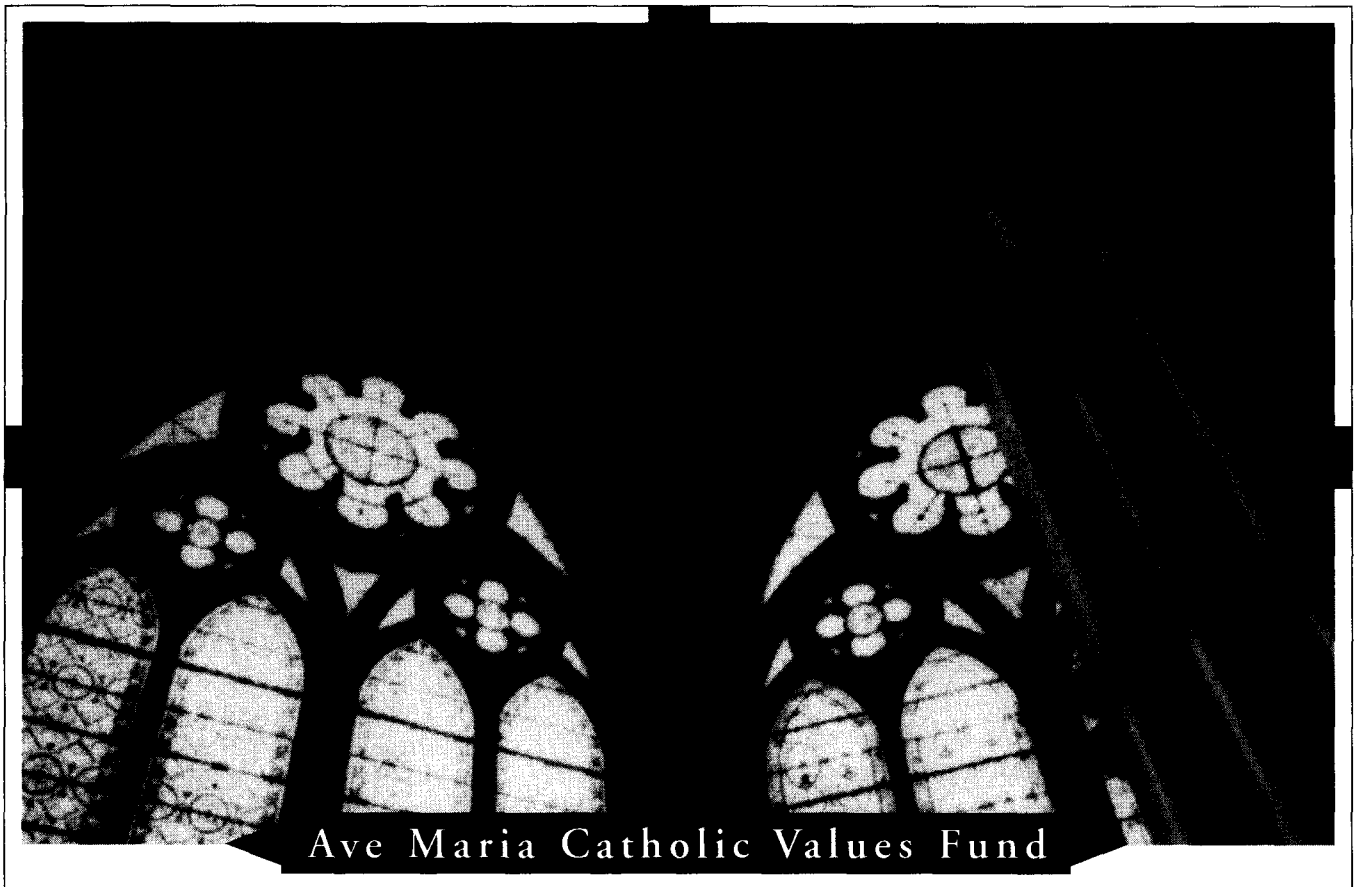

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Tanner concludes his book by telling us that for the first time in its history Ireland is experiencing immigration from such parts of the world as Africa and Asia. In his view, the rise of a multiracial Ireland "will do what decades of ecumenism have failed to achieve, render the struggle between Catholics and Protestants for the soul of Ireland redundant once and for all."

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The Uses of Pain

SACRED PAIN: HURTING THE BODY FOR THE SAKE OF THE SOUL. By ARIEL GLUCKLICH. *Oxford University Press. 278 pp. $27.50.*

***Reviewed by* Stephen G. Post**

IN THE CURRENT literature on the connections between science and religion, it is rare to find a discussion of pain. Cosmology, mathematical chaos theory, the anthropic principle, neurotheology, and love are among topics commonly treated. Ariel Glucklich has thus broken fresh ground in *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul,* which examines the positive role of pain across religious traditions.

But Glucklich, who teaches in the Theology Department at Georgetown, is much more than a deeply thoughtful student of world religions; he is equally fluent in the myriad scientific concepts and theories of pain prevalent today, most of which engage the neurosciences and psychiatry. Above all, he forces the reader to set aside the too easy assumption that pain is always a problem, and that it has no respectable place in the spiritual life. As he acknowledges, his book "is an unusual work in assuming that pain has served humanity in a variety of constructive religious and social ways."

Who has not at some point asked why it is that innumerable religious rituals involve inflicting intentional pain through forms of self-flagella-

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tion, barefoot pilgrimages, extreme fasting, sleepless nights in prayer vigils, piercing the body, wearing coarse and irritating garments, and the like? Witnesses from St. Anthony of the Desert to St. Francis of Assisi testify that intense spiritual and religious life may conflict with contemporary ideals of good health, comfort, and prosperity.

In a remarkably lucid opening chapter on "Religious Ways of Hurting," Glucklich subjects the concept of theodicy—the attempt to explain how a good and all-powerful God could allow pain to occur in human experience—to scrutiny. The author explains how various religious "models" of pain typically treat it less as a problem than as a solution—especially when it is intentional—and rarely equate it with suffering in any simple way. In the juridical model, for example, the martyr and ascetic may regard their painful experience as serving a divine purpose, giving rise to a "strange insensitivity to pain" as a means to divine insight and hidden truth. In this view, pain is less punishment than a test that leads to gnosis or wisdom. In the medical model, pain is "true medicine for the soul" while the military outlook treats it as "a weapon by means of which the body is subdued." In other words, bodily pain can be viewed as a force that purifies the soul.

After presenting an array of such interpretive models of pain, Glucklich turns to the domain of neuroscience, which teaches that "certain levels of pain possess analgesic qualities and can even induce euphoric states of mind." These states of mind are associated with the release of endogenous opioids (the endorphins) in the brain, as well as with other biochemical events that provide a firm scientific basis for religious rituals that require a painful rite of passage to a new self. Avoiding any single and inevitably reductive analysis, Glucklich explains why it is that pain is used and even welcomed in the history of religions. There are, it seems, empirical grounds for the classically religious assertion that pain—and perhaps especially self-inflicted pain—"fails to alienate the true lovers of God," and can even be a direct path to knowledge or experience of God.

The author fully realizes that self-inflicted pain is today usually interpreted as a form of psychopathology. But within the mystical context, "pain unmakes the profane world with its corporeal attachments and leads the mystics away from the body to self-transcendence." Glucklich contends that such meaningful pain and discipline elevates the individual into a world of deeper human community. Here pain is even blotted out—for example, via a process in the brain known as "gate-control" that profoundly alters biochemistry and consciousness. In an erudite scientific overview, the author shows how "*intentionally* painful manipulations of the body could lead to states of self-transcendence or effacement."

Later chapters take up psychological models of sacred pain and self-transformation, and even the tortures of the Inquisition, in which forced pain was, regrettably, viewed as redemptive. Glucklich is especially adept at handling the modern era of anesthetics, when pain came to be seen strictly as a medical problem to be overcome by the application of chemicals such as ether and chloroform. While this nineteenth-century application was heralded by many, it was also an issue of intense ethical debate among doctors, primarily because the wider culture still held pain to be beneficial in certain respects. As the author laments, "We have lost our capacity to understand why and how pain would be valuable for mystics, members of religious communities, and perhaps humanity as a whole. The role of pain, before it was displaced, was rich and nuanced, and ultimately situated persons within broader social and religious contexts." Glucklich hopes that his work "may help explain how a life can be painful and meaningful at the same time. Perhaps, in a minor way, understanding can then filter downward and help separate pain from suffering."

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Sacred Pain will undoubtedly be a jolting and discomforting book for anyone who assumes that spirituality and religion are entirely consistent with modern medical values. Historians of religion have long taken note of the ubiquitous presence of intentionally painful rituals and practices, and even made this a central heuristic key to understanding religious experiences. Whether we are considering some of the excruciating rites of passage among Native Americans, or the Muslim who walks for weeks on pilgrimage to Mecca with bloodied bare feet, something here runs against the grain of what we normally consider to be normal and healthy. The tendency to pathologize such actions is well documented, and as Glucklich acknowledges, the line between religious experience and psychopathology can be fuzzy. Yet in light of the time-honored place of sacred pain in the religions of the world, as well as the insights of neuroscientific approaches to understanding pain, he urges us not to be dismissive.

THE BOOK IS NOT without flaws. For one thing, Glucklich might have made some important theological distinctions. In Christianity, for example, the redemptive pain that sets the cosmos in balance is uniquely the province of Christ, who alone was perfect and who alone could indemnify or atone for the sins of the world. Moreover, Glucklich could have offered some insights into the complex balance between sacred pain and the stewardship responsibilities that religious traditions assert with respect to the gift of the body. Duties of self-care mitigate the extent of self-inflicted pain. What is the relationship, for instance, between the proscription against suicide and the phenomenon of sacred pain? Where do various traditions draw the line on self-inflicted pain, and why?

Yet overall the book succeeds in making a new place in our consciousness for sacred pain. I once encountered a devout Catholic woman who refused all pain medication despite her painful tumor. The health care professionals frantically called in a psychiatrist to declare her mentally incompetent—at which point pain care could be imposed. Fortunately, the psychiatrist involved respected the woman's faith, and, after a careful interview, concluded that she was in her right mind. The woman died after a long and painful battle with cancer, yet she remained prayerful and spiritually focused throughout her ordeal. Indeed, she seemed remarkably placid and peaceful. She

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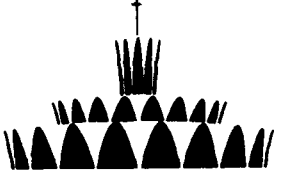

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did not cry, and she remained kind and generous until the end. Glucklich helps us to appreciate the legitimacy of such experiences. Pain cannot necessarily be equated with suffering, and for some it can even have redemptive value.

Sacred Pain also underscores how the ability to control pain medically has created a culture in which the experience of pain is judged to be unacceptable and, when completely unavoidable, unambiguously tragic. Our pursuit of sensate pleasure and our utilitarian demand for comfort have become quite absolute, removing us far from the values of an earlier time, when divine hopes helped people to navigate the experience of pain. The idea that freedom from all pain and discomfort is the only acceptable way to live has made us less sensitive to the realities of chronic pain in the lives of many, and less able to accept the fact that painful lives can also be good ones. We have, apparently, become less able to deal creatively with the physical and psychological experiences of pain that are coeval with the frailties of human existence.

Thus it is that suicide becomes an easy alternative to a life that falls short of the ideal of complete sensate comfort. It is now judged by many to be "merciful" to assist a person in pain to end his own life. Human dignity thus comes to be contingent on being pain free. Certainly where pain leads to suffering, the advent of modern pain medications is to be welcomed wholeheartedly. Yet Glucklich helps us to see what we have lost through all of our substantial gains.

Sacred Pain succeeds not only because of the immense and careful scholarship it displays, but also because it establishes a creative dialogue between science and religion on a question of enduring, and today largely forgotten, importance. Most of all, the book invites its readers to appreciate that pain need not be meaningless.

A Troubled Past–and Present

Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City. By Bernard Wasserstein. *Yale University Press. 412 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Thomas Stransky**

History dominates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Selective memories on both sides produce partial narratives that deny or obscure the claims of the other side. The fragmented narrations breed continuing distrust.

Ever since Simha Flapan's *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities* (1987), revisionist historians have set out to uncover new facts, upset myths, and rearrange accepted interpretations. The result has been a series of scholarly wars over who has the story right and who offers the best solution for an Israeli-Palestinian future, especially the future of Jerusalem. For within the Arab Middle East, all the dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are condensed and symbolized in Jerusalem—and in particular in its walled Old City of 220 acres and thirty-five thousand Jewish, Christian, and Muslim dwellers, where too much history crowds claustrophobic space. *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City* by Bernard Wasserstein, a professor of history at the University of Glasgow, is the latest book to wrestle with the extraordinarily complicated set of issues surrounding the city.

Jerusalem today includes the Old City and East Jerusalem, formerly held by Jordan and annexed by Israel in 1967, as well as West Jerusalem and the 1994 western expansion of the municipal borders. The city limits now encircle ninety-four square miles and at least 650,000 inhabitants. Sixty-two percent are Jewish, 38 percent non-Jewish, most of them Arabs. West Jerusalem has been almost bereft of Arabs since 1948; and during the past twenty years, East Jerusalem has been intentionally divided by enclaves of Jews that isolate the city's eighteen Arab villages and neighborhoods, so that, in the 1982 statement of deputy mayor Shmuel Meir, "No government in the future will be able to give it away." But despite these hopes, demographic facts show that the city's fate remains quite unclear. With the Arab minority currently increasing at an annual rate of 3 percent, twice the rate of the the Jewish majority, Arabs are likely to form the majority of voters in Israel's democratic capital within thirty years.

Wasserstein focuses on the political, religious, social, and demographic history of Jerusalem in order to

Thomas Stransky, *a Paulist priest, is former rector (1987-98) of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, where he still teaches.*

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understand the diplomatic issues surrounding questions of its political future. He takes only two chapters to summarize—quite successfully—the city's history up to the slow meltdown of the Ottoman Empire in the 1800s, when "the Jerusalem question in its modern form first emerged."

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The author has two theses. First, that "Jerusalem is more than ever a divided city," in fact, "the most deeply divided capital city in the world." Thus his second thesis: "The struggle for Jerusalem can be resolved only when there dawns some recognition of the reality and legitimacy of its plural character, spiritually, demographically, and—all claims notwithstanding—politically."

FROM THE OUTSET, Wasserstein sifts through the divergent religious claims, pieties, and "high emotions" over the city. Its holiness, or lack of it, is "neither a constant or an absolute." The city's character waxes and wanes according to economic, cultural, and political influences. In today's Jerusalem, piety easily becomes political, and politics transforms into piety.

Not that antireligious passions are immune from becoming political as well. The early Zionists refused recourse to any divine intervention for the movement towards "a nation like other nations." A Zionist needed no god to dictate what was ethical or moral. No surprise, then, that initially Orthodox rabbis in Europe and in Jerusalem spurned political Zionism. It was, in their view, an arrogant, solely human endeavor that opposed Yahweh's eschatological plans for the redemption that will come only when the Messiah chooses to arrive. The required daily prayer, "Next Year in Jerusalem," encapsulates the Jewish desire to return to the focal point of messianic hopes. The prayer did not imply Jewish sovereignty in a modern state.

In *Der Judenstaat* (1896), Theodor Herzl proposed Haifa for the capital of the the secular "State of the Jews"—not Jerusalem. For Herzl, Jerusalem was the deposit of "two thousand years of inhumanity and intolerance." Those who built Tel Aviv on coastal sand dunes in 1909 intended a new city that would be burdened by no religious baggage. By the late 1930s Tel Aviv had become the Jewish center of gravity. It was the base of most political parties and home of nearly all of their leaders. It was the real capital of Zionism. Jerusalem remained the religious center for Jews, Christians, and Muslims—which was a primary reason the British attempted to make it an internationally guaranteed *corpus separatum*.

Eighteen months after Israel declared itself an independent State (May 1948), it proclaimed Jerusalem its capital, despite international opposition. That action inflamed religious passions, especially after the 1967 military occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank—biblical Judaea and Samaria, the heartland of *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), an event that became for many Jews "the beginning of the flowering of messianic redemption." In that perspective, Jerusalem, founded by King David, "the chosen City of God" (Psalm 48:2), had been properly restored as capital of Israel.

It should thus come as no surprise that almost all ultra-Orthodox Jews now support the political slogan, "Jerusalem should and will remain the unified and eternal capital of the State of Israel, under the absolute sovereignty of Israel alone." Prime Minister Ariel Sharon repeated the statement in his response to Colin Powell's policy speech (November 19, 2001), which placed Jerusalem on the negotiating table. The current steady exodus of so many not-too-religious Jews from the city in favor of Tel Aviv, and the immigration of so many Israeli and diasporan Orthodox to West and East Jerusalem, has had the effect of radicalizing the city's politics.

Muslims, for their part, believe Jerusalem to be the third of their holy cities (after Mecca and Medina), and they still call it Al-Quds (The Holy). It is graced by the Al-Haram al-Sharif (The Noble Sanctuary), which the Jews call the Temple Mount. Members of both faiths consider it "the navel of the earth." Wasserstein skillfully traces the competitive struggle for this most divisive of places, which

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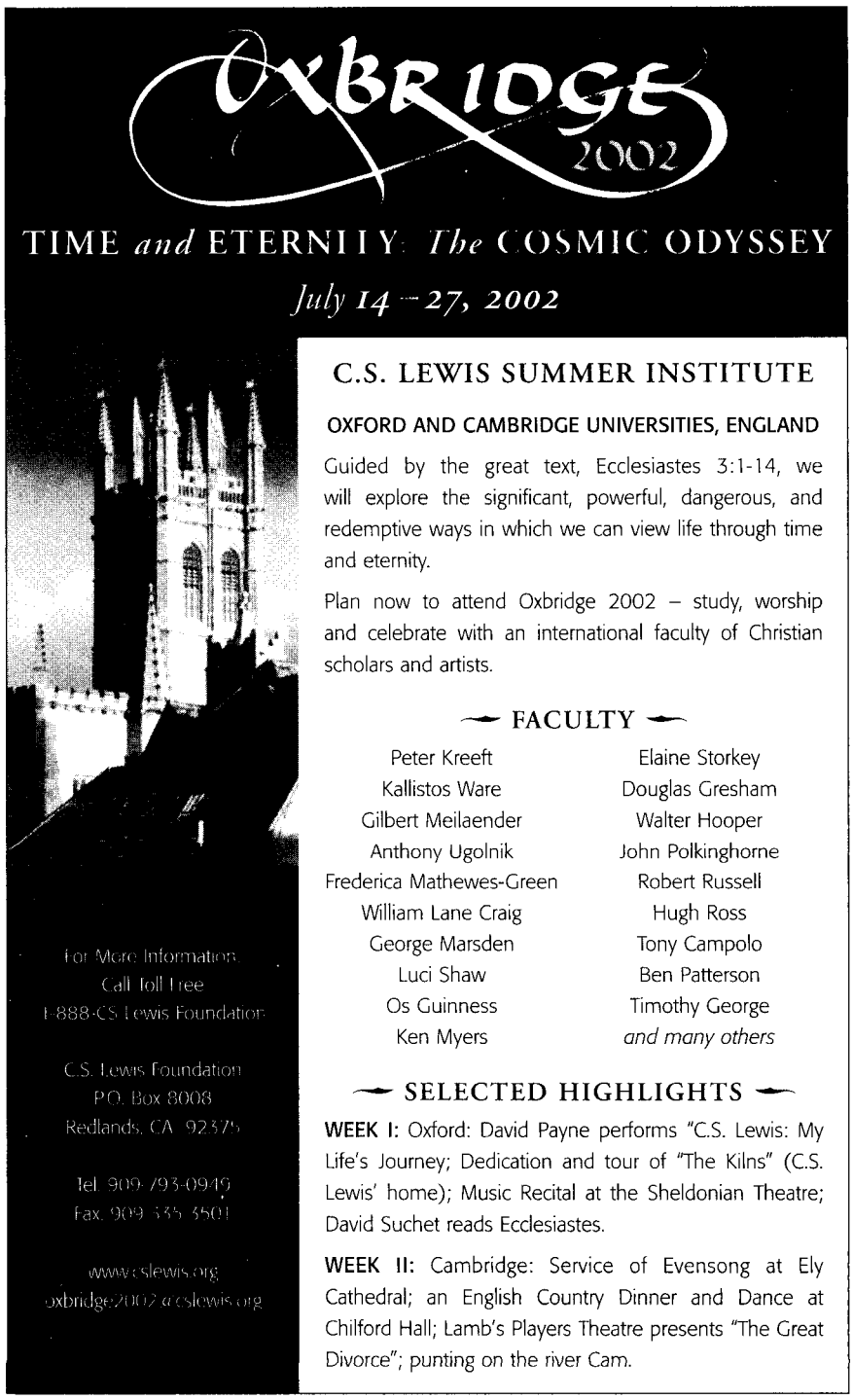
was once pagan, then Jewish, Roman, Christian, Muslim, again Christian, again Muslim, and now Jewish/Muslim. It was at the Clinton-Barak-Arafat negotiating summit (Camp David, 2000) that President Clinton discovered to his surprise that the main unresolvable issue was the ownership of this small piece of real estate. As Avishai Margarit has asked, how does one divide a symbol?

For Muslim extremists, such as the anti-Arafat Hamas, Allah has given the entire Middle East, which includes the intrusive "Zionist entity," as an Islamic trust (*waqf*) for all generations until the day of judgment. Hence their own slogan, "Jerusalem should be forever united solely under Palestinian [read: Islamic] sovereignty." The extremists would not support the Palestinian Authority's less radical desire for sovereignty over East Jerusalem, including the Old City. In general, both ultrareligious Jews and Muslims judge that pragmatic bargaining over Jerusalem is a blasphemous act against Yahweh/Allah. Political compromise implies religious appeasement.

If Wasserstein's book has a flaw it is that he underestimates the theological and political role of Christians in the city. In particular, he has little to say about the long history of Christian anti-Judaism in Jerusalem, which began almost two millennia ago and continued well into the twentieth century. Western and Eastern Christians judged that the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in A.D. 70 and the final expulsion of the Jews in 135 was God's punishment for their killing of Jesus in that same city. Constantine's transformed Jerusalem symbolized the triumph of Christ and his Church of the New Covenant. The Christian Byzantines continued to leave the Mount in ruins, even using it as a garbage dump. It was not until Omar accepted the surrender of the city in 638 that the esplanade was cleaned up, preparing the way for the building of the Dome of the Rock (691) and the al-Aksa Mosque (705-715).

The same theology and piety helped to justify the Latin Crusaders' zeal when they captured Jerusalem from the Muslims in 1099. They torched its synagogues along with the Jews they sheltered. Eventually the Templars converted the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque into churches—a Christian triumph over both Jews and Muslims. The annual Palm Sunday procession ascended the Mount, circled the True Cross in the Templum Solomonis (al-Aksa), then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the Templum Domini (Dome), before descending to the new "navel of the earth," the Holy Sepulchre church.

The Jews were also thought to have forfeited their right to a restored homeland as a divine punishment. "They should remain in the dispersion [diaspora, *galut*] until the end of the world." (Thus wrote the Vatican's semi-official *Civiltà Cattolica* shortly after the first international Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897.) According to his private diary, when Herzl was in Rome to seek Pius X's good will and support for the Zionist dream and program in January 1904, the Pope replied: "We are unable to support this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews going to Jerusalem, but we could never support it. . . . The Jews have not recognized our Lord, therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people."

Today things are very different. The conflictual context of the Holy Land does keep alive remnants of this classical anti-Judaism among Jerusalem's Christians, but it is very minor. And this despite the fact that most contemporary Christians belong to ecclesial communities that have not had a Vatican II and its *Nostra Aetate*, which officially condemned anti-Semitism. Christians of the Holy Land are very conscious of standing faithfully on the shoulders of almost two millennia of fellow disciples in the Mother Church. This fosters their primary identity, even more so now when they are in eclipse. In the Jerusalem of 1948 the thirty-two thousand Christians made up approximately 19 percent of the population; today, at twelve thousand, they are a mere 2 percent.

Jerusalem Christians today claim only civil rights to religious freedom—the right to retain and staff their holy sites, churches, schools, pilgrim hostels, and other institutions, and to practice and witness their faith. They lament the discrimination they face, not so much as Christians but as non-Jews. They are mostly tax-paying Arab citizens who, like the Muslims but unlike the Jews, do not enjoy their civil right to an equitable share in municipal common resources for education, housing, and other social services, including garbage pickups.

WASSERSTEIN EMPHASIZES the centuries-long internecine divisions between the churches in Jerusalem, focused on control of the holy sites and practices of crude proselytism. But he omits to note that in the last decade a pervading ecumenical spirit and common witness among the laity, clergy, and hierarchs is gradually transcending church divisions. He does not mention, for example, the 1994 common statement on the future of Jerusalem by the three patriarchs (Greek and Armenian Orthodox, and Latin), seven other church leaders of the Orthodox and Catholic Eastern churches, and the Anglican and Lutheran bishops. These local leaders joined the Vatican in proposing for the Old City a special juridical and political statute, permanent and stable, which the international community would guarantee. Jerusalem's Old City, they declared, "is too precious to be dependent solely on the municipal or national political authorities, whoever they may be"—that is, Israeli, Palestinian, or both.

Can the earthly Jerusalem question ever be resolved, or must one settle for the cynical appraisal of Meron Benvenisti: "The torn city is an enigma without a solution"? Wasserstein briefly—and wisely—outlines some of the already over seventy plans that have been proposed for the city. He rules out the idea of sole Israeli or Palestinian sovereignty. Although many of the possible solutions have merit, Wasserstein concludes that "they all look like flimsy jigsaw puzzles to a profound problem of human relations."

For anyone who seeks a comprehensive descriptive background to the complex problems and high emotions in the struggle for Jerusalem, this book is highly recommended.

Tocqueville from the Left

TOCQUEVILLE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: THE MAKING OF A THEORETICAL AND POLITICAL LIFE. By SHELDON S. WOLIN. *Princeton University Press. 650 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* Daniel J. Mahoney**

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE is an inescapable presence in the contemporary debate about the nature of the democratic dispensation. His work is used to validate almost every theoretical and partisan current and is appealed to by politicians who wish to establish their intellectual credentials. For many, Tocqueville is primarily the French observer who traveled to America in 1830-31 and recognized the superiority of our institutions and way of life. In this view, Tocqueville is a philo-American who praised us for our robust local institutions, our prodigious "art of association," and our ability to make the Christian religion and "self-interest well understood" cohere in a livable human world. This is a reassuring Tocqueville who informs and elevates, but does not challenge, our democratic self-confidence. There is a great deal of truth to this interpretation.

But a wide range of commentators have brought another, deeper, and more disconcerting Tocqueville to our attention. This Tocqueville is much more ambivalent about democratic modernity. His writings are

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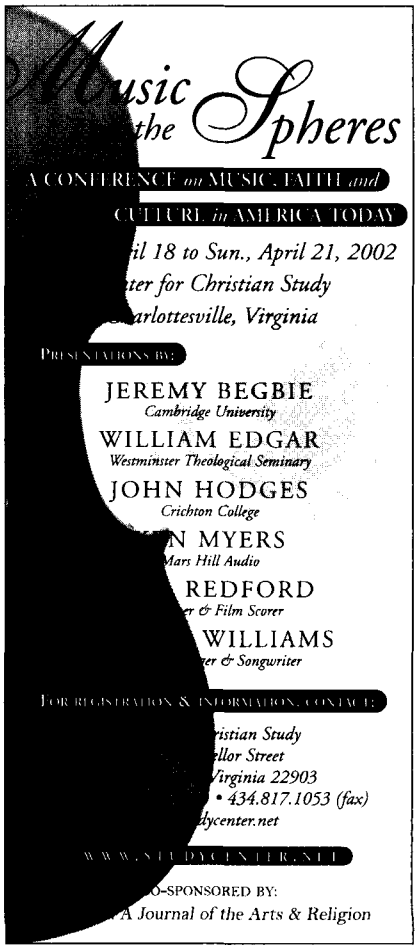
infused by a worry about an emerging "democratic" world where such goods as the disinterested search for truth, a proud regard for political liberty, and fidelity to an "objective" moral order are threatened by a democratic "individualism" that erodes human connectedness and denies the very principle of authority in the political, intellectual, and spiritual worlds. As the distinguished political theorist Sheldon S. Wolin suggests, in his impressive if flawed new study, *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds: The Making of a Theoretical and Political Life*, Tocqueville was an observer and practitioner of politics who tried to mediate between two sets of oppositions—on the one hand, theory and practice, and on the other, democracy and what he somewhat capaciously called "aristocracy" (encompassing all the worlds that came before the New World of democratic consent). For Tocqueville, the world of inequality, of authoritative command, was dead and beyond all hope of revival. From the far side of the democratic triumph, it was possible to see that the antiquated world of aristocracy had never sufficiently appreciated the "common humanity" of man, the profound similarities among human beings. And yet, for all its imperfections, the old regime provided an image of human grandeur that was one crucial ingredient for judging the emerging democratic order. The old regime lived on in Tocqueville's soul even if it did not completely form his mind.

As Wolin demonstrates, Tocqueville self-consciously tried to adopt the perspective of God, whom he claimed could appreciate both the justice of democratic equality and the goodness of those particular excellences that were threatened by the "democratic revolution." Wolin's Tocqueville is a theorist who observed and judged the "spectacle" of the democratic revolution from a perspective that is neither democratic nor aristocratic but informed by a solicitude for the liberty and dignity of human beings. A sometime parliamentarian and political official (he was briefly foreign minister of France), Tocqueville's own political experience was crucial to his reflections on the theory and practice of democracy. He cared deeply about politics and was a player in the ideological drama of his time. In between political engagements he wrote three classic works of political reflection, *Democracy in America* (published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840), his *Recollections* (written in 1850 and 1851 and published posthumously over forty years later), and *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (published in 1856).

Wolin's book rather remarkably combines generally accurate and sometimes profound readings of Tocqueville's wide-ranging corpus with a profound resistance to Tocqueville's deepest spiritual and intellectual insights. Tocqueville is filled with what he calls "religious terror" before the emerging march of equality and he firmly resists every form of democratic dogmatism. Wolin, in contrast, is a passionate partisan of democratic "inclusivity" and a critic of any hierarchical conception of human life or foundational notion of truth. Why the attraction of this aging New Leftist for the Norman aristocrat whose endorsement of the emerging democratic order was tempered by a sober ambivalence? What allure can Tocqueville hold for a deeply committed man of the left?

Wolin is above all attracted to Tocqueville's effort to revive the political sphere of human life, to theorize and reinvigorate *la chose publique*. He suggestively remarks that Tocqueville "might be the last influential theorist who can be said to have truly cared about political life." Tocqueville's conception of the political was by no means narrowly institutional. It incorporated both the practice of self-government and the traditions, customs, and *moeurs* that gave support to a vigorous democratic social order. Tocqueville's theme was the political culture of freedom and his enemy was an individualism that eroded social attachments and any vibrant expression of public-spiritedness.

The presentation of political life in volume one of *Democracy in America* elicits Wolin's most unequivocal appreciation. There Tocqueville pays tribute to the vigorous practice of local self-government in both Puritan and post-revolutionary America. But Wolin wants to separate Tocqueville's defense of political participation from his emphasis on its salutary moral effects. He does not share the ambition of Tocqueville's political science to educate and elevate the souls of men. In a decidedly postmodern spirit (the author is an admirer of Foucault), Wolin opposes any external imposition or restriction on the self-expression of a democratic peo-



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ple. For Wolin, democratic politics begins as a protest against exclusionary politics. It is inseparable from revolution since revolution "shatters or rejects many of the established forms of politics." Where Tocqueville wanted to firmly distinguish the democratic and revolutionary spirits, Wolin longs to combine them, despite (or perhaps because of) the likely incendiary results of doing so. For Tocqueville, participation in political life is an intrinsic good because it allows one to pursue a good in common with one's fellow citizens. His case for "the political" has important classical or Aristotelian resonances. Political liberty provides a "light" by which one can judge the virtues and vices of men. For his part, Wolin explicitly denies that there is any standard for judging the choices of human beings apart from or above their own wills. For Tocqueville self-government constrains the will; for Wolin self-government emancipates that will.

Wolin is sympathetic to Tocqueville's defense of "difference" against the homogenizing effects of democracy. He ably presents Tocqueville's critique of the tyrannical propensities of "general ideas" that deny the dignity of the particular or the rare. Wolin's account of Tocqueville's critique of Cartesianism, with its dangerous validation of "private judgment, doubt, abstraction" and its narrow conception of "method," is particularly good. He highlights Tocqueville's desire to balance a democratic emphasis on generality and equality with an aristocratic emphasis on the need to respect the integrity of the rare and exceptional. And he is sensitive to the Pascalian "moment" in Tocqueville's thought. As Wolin recounts, Pascal provided a modern Christian approach for overcoming both the tyranny of rationalistic method and the debilitating effects of radical doubt. Tocqueville learned from Pascal that certain truths about the human soul could be reasonably articulated even if they were not rationally demonstrable.

AND YET, for all that, Wolin is very much the democratic intellectual in thrall to the "general idea" of equality. Time and again Wolin the partisan of emancipatory democracy forgets the insights so nicely limned by Wolin the exegete. For him, revealed religion is not a salutary reminder of the differentiated character of the world, a protection against materialism and pantheism, but rather a pernicious instrument of "social control." He is tone deaf to Tocqueville's arguments

President for a new Catholic university

The Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Committee invite nominations and expressions of interest for the position of President of Ave Maria University, appointment effective, Fall, 2003. This new academic institution operates three undergraduate campuses, Ave Maria College in Ypsilanti, Michigan (http://www.avemaria.edu), St. Mary's College of Ave Maria University, Orchard Lake, Michigan (http://www.stmarys.ols.edu), and Ave Maria College of the Americas, San Marcos, Nicaragua (http://www.avemaria.edu.ni). It also operates a graduate program in theology, The Institute of Pastoral Theology (IPT).

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about both the truth and the utility of biblical religion.

As the volume proceeds, Wolin increasingly displays the voice of a democratic intellectual. His analysis of Tocqueville becomes less generous, more defensive. The profound critique of the arid rationalism of democratic intellectual life in volume two of *Democracy in America* is said to have "an aroma of reaction" about it. But surely Wolin must appreciate that the antiquity of ideas is not necessarily an argument against their truth. Wolin likewise emphatically denies that there is any necessary connection between democracy and centralization and remains adamantly committed to his vision of democracy as a participatory utopia. His notion of freedom is essentially antinomian and resists any recognition of the need for self-limitation or the regulation of human passions. In the spirit of Foucault, "power" is always presented as an instrument of oppressive authority and never seen as serving legitimate social purposes. And the role of "the people" is by definition liberating and never the source of new oppressions. Tocqueville, the penetrating critic of majority tyranny, knew better than to romanticize the collective will of the people.

The same bias can be seen at work in Wolin's confrontation with Tocqueville's analysis of the next "democratic" revolution, the socialist one. In the *Recollections*, his remarkable autobiographical reflection on the revolution of 1848, Tocqueville presented socialism as an unprecedented threat to human and political liberty. He had no confidence that socialist revolution would inaugurate a democratic utopia; instead, he feared the onset of a soul-destroying despotism. Wolin castigates this judgment as an example of Tocqueville's "mean-spiritedness" and "aristocratic resentment" and thereby ignores the overwhelming historical evidence that revolutionary euphoria almost inevitably gives rise to stifling conformity and a rigid centralization of power. The rise of socialism led Tocqueville to forcefully reiterate his conviction that a balanced and regulated liberty depended upon such "aristocratic inheritances" as family, property, and patriotism. In Tocqueville's view, true human liberty is "liberty under God and the law." Amidst the whirlwind of democratic transformation, it is necessary to defend the "natural limits" at the foundation of any human order.

I have emphasized the remarkable tension between Wolin the exegete and theorist. In fairness, I should also note that this book is largely an effort to delineate Tocqueville's thought and only secondarily a critical evaluation of it. As a broad presentation of the Tocquevillian project it is an impressive achievement. But it lacks the solidity and depth of the writings on Tocqueville by Peter Lawler, Pierre Manent, Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, and others.

Despite its not inconsiderable strengths, *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds* unintentionally reveals the tremendous spiritual deficit at the heart of the postmodern project. Seeing no real enemies to the left, Wolin awaits ever more democratic cures to the spiritual discontents that accompany modernity. He is overwhelmed with contempt for the bourgeois world that far surpasses the measured distaste that Tocqueville sometimes expressed for merely bourgeois existence. Since Wolin dismisses aristocratic grandeur and traditional religion as forms of repression, he has no resort except to what Aurel Kolnai called "the idol of the common man." Now, one can certainly admire and support the effort to bring all of the excluded into the human city. But what is one to do with one's freedom? What are the moral truths, if any, that ought to guide human choice? To these vital questions, Wolin responds with a thunderous silence.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Hitler and the Holocaust. By Robert S. Wistrich. *Modern Library. 295 pp. $19.95.*

Robert Wistrich's *Hitler and the Holocaust* starts out with great promise. The brevity of the text (240 pages, excluding notes) means that discussions are necessarily concise, and he relies on some controversial sources, but Wistrich does a creditable job discussing the forces that shaped Hitler's belief in a "Jewish menace" that had to be eradicated. He brings particular insight to Jewish life in the ghetto and aptly contrasts Nazi and Soviet terror. For 117 pages, *Hitler and the Holocaust* looks like of one the better short volumes written on this subject. Unfortunately, it falls apart starting with

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Chapter Five, where the author begins to play the "blame game." Wistrich finds collaboration all over Europe, indifference to the Jewish plight among the Allies, and lack of compassion from the Christian churches. President Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Pope Pius XII, German clergy, and Croatian Cardinal (now Blessed) Alojzije Stepinac are particularly targeted, but no one escapes blame, not even other Jews. Wistrich argues that world leaders and people in occupied nations should have taken a more openly confrontational position against the Nazis. He thinks that this might have reduced the number of Jews who died in the camps, but he never discusses the very real possibility that such actions might also have made things worse. (In fact, in discussing the deportation of baptized Jews from Holland, he does not even mention that it was prompted by a statement of condemnation issued by the Catholic bishops.) Consider what Wistrich writes about Hungary. In 1942, Prime Minister Miklos Kallay rejected German demands to expropriate all Jewish wealth, to impose the yellow star, and to deport Jews to the east. Wistrich reports that this "was almost certainly a factor in the German invasion of Hungary nearly one year later." With the invasion came Jewish deportations, which were carried out with Hungarian assistance. Eventually, as Wistrich reports, the Hungarian government "did buckle to pressure from the Western Allies, Pope Pius XII, the king of Sweden, and other dignitaries" and stopped the deportations. This, in turn, caused the Germans to overthrow the existing government and appoint a new, terribly violent government which "tormented and butchered" twenty thousand Hungarian Jews. More would have been killed, Wistrich notes, if not for the good work of the papal nuncio, Swiss diplomats, and Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. This illustrates the problem with Wistrich's advocacy of more direct confrontation. Resistance to the Nazis repeatedly made things worse for the victims. Wistrich's most important insight is that *war* made the Holocaust possible. Unfortunately, he misses the important implication stemming from that insight—namely, that efforts to bring about peace were also efforts to end the Holocaust. In the final chapter, on modernity, Wistrich argues that the mechanistic approach to killing made it easier for people to carry out horrible deeds. It is a well-made point; however, he dismisses—or overlooks—the linkage between modernity (including Darwinism and eugenics) and Nazi ideology. One fears that he rejected this argument primarily because it would have undercut his efforts to blame Christianity for the Holocaust.

— Ronald J. Rychlak

Venice: Lion City. The Religion of Empire. By Garry Wills. *Simon & Schuster. 420 pp. $35.*

Venice, the city of the sea, styles itself "La Serenissima," the most tranquil or serene city, but Wills writes about another city, the Venice of merchants and admirals, the imperial city of warships and commercial fleets, the Lion City with St. Mark (whose symbol is a lion) as its patron. His is "an older, tougher town," one remembered by Italians, as I discovered on a visit there this summer, but hidden to eyes tutored by art historians. In a sixteenth-century painting by Battista d'Agnolo, *St. Mark at the Recruiting Table*, the apostle sits at the end of the table with a book open on his lap, his eyes fixed on three local officials examining new recruits. It is hard to tell, says Wills, whether it is the Gospel he is holding or a list of recruits. Wills has a story to tell and a way to tell it ("the history through the art, not the art through the history"), but I found the book episodic, the chapters often interesting in themselves, yet only loosely strung together. Wills has obviously read widely and chosen his illustrations carefully (there are 109 black-and-white and thirty-one splendid color plates) and he captures the unique blend of public piety and patriotism that drove the

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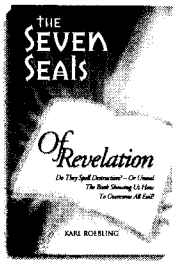

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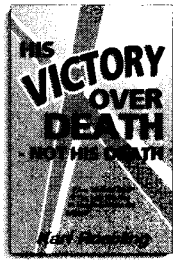

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city's life. In the Liturgy of Holy Thursday, for example, the doge wears a long cassocklike robe in scarlet to commemorate the shedding of Christ's blood, and in Tintoretto's painting *Christ's Agony in the Garden* Christ wears the same scarlet robe. In a suggestive epilogue Wills speculates that the reason many people have difficulty with this Venice (and prefer the Venice of Ruskin the art critic) is that it was "not only extremely worldly but extremely religious." For Ruskin, as the world prevails religion must give way, but Wills believes that empire gave purpose and confidence to Venice's citizens, nurtured learning and the arts and civic achievement, and inspired fervent religious devotion.

— *Robert Louis Wilken*

Christian Hope and Christian Life: Raids on the Inarticulate. By Rowan A. Greer. *Crossroad. 282 pp. $24.95.*

This book was written at leisure—and is best read at leisure. It is the work of a mature scholar of the early Church who has been reading sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English theology and poetry as long as he has been reading the Church Fathers and the Scriptures. In five reflective chapters he offers the fruits of his reading of the New Testament, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Donne, and Jeremy Taylor, with poems by George Herbert, Thomas Traherne, and T. S. Eliot added as grace notes. The central theme, as the title suggests, is Christian life lived in hope of the resurrection of the body, but along the way Greer discusses the vision of God, love of God, repentance, forgiveness, justification by faith, and becoming friends of God. He pairs John Donne with Augustine, both of whom view Christian life as anticipation of the life to come (nicely illustrated by Herbert's poem "The Flower") and Gregory of Nyssa with Jeremy Taylor, who view our lives as capable of participating in our destiny (nicely illustrated by lines from Traherne). *Christian Hope and Christian Life* can be read as an interpretation of the history of Christian thought, yet Greer does not present his views as points to be argued, but as meditations on enduring Christian truths. The book's pleasures are to be found in the many apt citations from these four figures in conversation with the Scriptures and with one another, and in Greer's wise and thoughtful musings on their lives and words.

— *RLW*

On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth. By Jay Mechling. *University of Chicago Press. 323 pp. $30.*

Jay Mechling is an Eagle Scout (once an Eagle Scout, always an Eagle Scout, he reminds us) and Professor of American Studies at the University of California, Davis. He loves scouting, and this extended narrative cum analysis of his scouting experience will require the patience of readers who share his passion. The "boy problem"—how to turn boys into men—brought the Boy Scouts of America into being in 1910 and is much discussed again today. Mechling's enthusiasm for scouting does not extend to the national leadership of the BSA, which he thinks has chosen the conservative side in the culture wars and is making wrong decisions on the much controverted "three G's"—God, gays, and girls. On religion, his history of the movement suggests that the founders were far from being orthodox. On gays, he enlists currently dominant theories of gender construction to argue for the admission of homosexual scouts and scoutmasters, which he believes would have the benefit of exposing scouts to different models of what it means to be masculine. On the third G, he tends to side with tradition and common sense in understanding that a distancing from the "girl world" is required for boys to be boys on their way to becoming men. It may be true that most adolescents are obsessed with sex and matters scatological, but in

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Mechling's telling of the story, his "Troop 49" seems to be over the top. This book will not be popular at BSA headquarters, and will surely be cited as scholarly evidence in continuing litigation aimed at getting the organization to change its ways. *On My Honor* contains much of interest about the scouts, and about the inescapable anxieties of adolescence, making it more the pity that the author felt obliged to make the improbable argument that the movement's cultivation of what it means to be a man would be enhanced by affirming homosexuality. Finally, most troops are sponsored by churches, and anecdotal evidence suggests that most of them are more serious about religious observance than is the by-the-way nature piety of "Troop 49." Nonetheless, the book is an informed and generally readable report on one of America's major institutions, and on the "boy problem" that will, one may hope, never go away.

BEAUTY FOR ASHES: SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS ON THE ATTACK ON AMERICA. Edited by JOHN FARINA. *Crossroad. 292 pp. $15.95 paper.*

A collection of a couple of hundred statements made in the immediate aftermath of September 11, mainly by religious leaders and institutions—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist. There are curiosities, such as the assertion of the editor of *America*, a Jesuit publication, that President Bush's talk about being at war might upset "Islamic public opinion." Then there is the pacifist Dalai Lama writing to Bush that "violence will only increase the cycle of violence," but acknowledging that what he should do "is a very difficult question" and ending with, "I am sure that you will make the right decision." *Beauty for Ashes* is a very mixed bag, but, all in all, a valuable collection for the historical record.

AMERICA'S FIRST DYNASTY: THE ADAMSES, 1735-1918. By RICHARD BROOKHISER. *Free Press. 256 pp. $25.*

In considerably less than half the pages David McCullough devoted to John, Richard Brookhiser takes on John, John Quincy, Charles Francis, and Henry. Nor is he as devoted to John, who, like John Quincy, was in Brookhiser's view a failure as President. Charles Francis lived up to the family legacy by, when Ambassador to the Court of St. James, keeping Britain from taking the Confederate side in the Civil War. Maybe because he, too, was a writer, the author seems fondest of Henry, who gave his life to mainly caustic reflections on the greatness from which the American experiment had fallen. George F. Will praises the book as a welcome relief from "bloated biographies that are larger than their subjects." Perhaps so, but one is left wondering whether these subjects, and especially John, were quite so small.

CLARENCE THOMAS: A BIOGRAPHY. By ANDREW PEYTON THOMAS. *Encounter. 596 pp. $28.95.*

With lively prose and convincing arguments, the author (not a relative) portrays a man of extraordinary talent and toughness who almost broke under the brutal hearings on his nomination to the Supreme Court. The demolition of the confused charges brought by Anita Hill should settle the matter for all but fevered partisans. At the same time, the author believes that Justice Thomas was less than entirely candid in his claim that he had not discussed with others his views on the merits of the *Roe v. Wade* abortion decision. What comes through most powerfully is a character of true grit in the face of intimidating odds, a thoughtful and articulate jurist determined to make his mark in judicial history, and a deeply convinced Christian who prizes, above all, his once lost and then recovered Catholicism.

FAITH AND NARRATIVE. Edited by KEITH E. YANDELL. *Oxford University Press. 270 pp. $49.95.*

Narrative theology and narrative ethics have been all the rage for some time now. In its "strong" form, the suggestion is that narrative must displace propositional, discursive, or systematic discourse. This book includes essays by thinkers as various as James Billington, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Eleanore Stump, and George Steiner. Paul Griffiths is especially good in explaining why the strong narrative proposal is finally incoherent, while affirming the great but limited bene-

CORRECTION

University Faculty for Life
Twelfth Annual Meeting on May 31-June 2, 2002

To propose a paper contact:
Professor Keith Cassidy, Department of History, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1, or email: **kcassidy@uoguelph.ca**

(Proposals must be received by May 6)

Professor Cassidy's e-mail address was listed incorrectly in the February 2002 issue of FIRST THINGS.

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fits issuing from the rediscovery of narrative in contemporary thought, and in theology more specifically.

Religion, Scholarship, Higher Education: Perspectives, Models, and Future Prospects. Edited by Andrea Sterk. *University of Notre Dame Press. 272 pp. $30.*

A batch of mainly thoughtful essays from a seminar on religion and higher education. The essays cover the waterfront, and then some. The subtitle could go on to read "in the Light of Reflections about What is Right and Wrong about the World." Some of the essays will no doubt be useful to people in the religion and higher education business, although most are marred by a defensive tone and timid plea that religion be given, as it is said, "a place at the table."

Challenging Catholics: A Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue. By Dwight Longenecker and John Martin. *Paternoster (www.paternoster-publishing.com). 208 pp. $10.99 paper.*

Longenecker, a Catholic convert from Anglicanism, and Martin, an evangelical Anglican, engage in candid, informed, and constructive conversation about the important questions. A model encounter between separated brethren seeking to be faithful together.

Sexuality, Marriage, and Family: Readings in the Catholic Tradition. Edited by Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor. *University of Notre Dame Press. 536 pp. $50.*

A judicious selection, from the patristic era to the present, that recommends itself for classroom use. Divergent views in current controversies are fairly represented and responsibly argued.

John Paul II—Witness to Truth. Edited by Kenneth D. Whitehead. *St. Augustine's Press. 134 pp. $17 paper.*

Addresses on the title subject at a meeting of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. Authors include George Weigel, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Richard John Neuhaus, Janet E. Smith, and Mary Ann Glendon. Solid stuff.

The Rapture Trap. By Paul Thigpen. *Ascension Press (West Chester, Pennsylvania). 260 pp. $11.99 paper.*

Billed as "a Catholic response to 'End Times' fever," this is a popular, easy to read, and theologically reliable statement of what the Catholic Church, on the basis of Scripture, does and does not teach about the consummation of history. It should be welcomed for its positive teaching and as a corrective to the sundry apocalypticisms to which Christians, including Catholics, in this country are prone.

He Shines in All That's Fair. By Richard J. Mouw. *Eerdmans. 95 pp. $14 paper.*

The president of Fuller Theological Seminary winsomely explains why a Calvinist understanding of "common grace" provides a basis for engagement with culture and the intellectual life.

The Lost Bible: Forgotten Scriptures Revealed. By J. R. Porter. *University of Chicago Press. 256 pp. $35.*

A stunningly beautiful book, lavishly illustrated, that provides a fascinating introduction to ancient scriptures that did not make it into the Jewish or Christian canons. Its artistic merits will earn it a place on the coffee table, and its engaging scholarly commentary will supply hours of serious reading.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Orthodoxy and "Parallel Monologues"

I don't know how many of our subscribers are Orthodox Christians. But from those who are, we get frequent complaints that insufficient attention is paid that very large part of the Christian world. So here goes. The occasion is a remarkable address by Professor John H. Erickson of St. Vladimir Orthodox Seminary in Crestwood, New York, delivered at the National Workshop on Christian Unity, which met last year in San Diego, California. Erickson reports that in 1990 he opined, "The Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and with it, communism. With it also fell ecumenism as we have known it."

The last decade, he believes, has only reinforced that judgment. The Orthodox churches of Georgia and Bulgaria have withdrawn from the World Council of Churches (WCC), and other churches are under pressure to withdraw. In 1997 at Georgetown University, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew spoke of Orthodoxy as being "ontologically different" from other churches. This is sometimes referred to as the "friends, brothers, heretics" speech. Patriarch Alexei II of Moscow remains adamantly opposed to the Pope's visiting Russia, and his other visits have met with a very mixed reception. At St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai joint prayer was carefully avoided; in Jerusalem Patriarch Diodorus made a point of noting that he had not prayed with the Pope. (But note that, as of this writing, there are signals that the Russian Church may be weakening in its opposition to a papal visit.)

Is it the case, as Samuel (Clash of Civilizations) Huntington has said, that ecumenism was a Cold War phenomenon that has given way to the stark division between the "West" and the "Orthodox" civilization of Russia and the Balkans? Erickson writes: "Some alarming questions arise. If the Orthodox mental world is so radically different from that of the West, what implications does this have for ecumenical relations, whether globally or here in North America? What implications does this have for people like me, who call themselves Orthodox Christians and belong to Orthodox churches, but who certainly are not only *in* the West but also in many respects *of* the West? From personal experience, I can tell you that the authenticity of our Orthodoxy increasingly is being questioned, both from abroad and here as well. And another, more far-reaching question also arises: Is ecumenism—like liberal democracy and for that matter communism—in fact simply a product of the West, one of its many ideologies, whose universal claims and aspirations will inevitably fail in the emerging world order, now that Western hegemony can no longer be taken for granted, now that the legitimating myths of the Enlightenment have lost their persuasive power?"

Already in the nineteenth century, some Orthodox reached out ecumenically, mainly to Anglicans and Old Catholics. Orthodox theologians were significantly involved in Faith and Order during the interwar period. When the WCC was formed in 1948, the Soviet regime required Orthodox leaders to condemn it as part of a Western plot, but that changed dramatically in 1961. "At the New Delhi assembly of the WCC in 1961, the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe joined the WCC en masse. Their membership was advantageous for all concerned. In various ways Orthodox membership made the WCC itself more 'ecumenical,' more global, more sympathetic to the diversity of situations in which Christians struggle in their witness to the gospel. At the same time, membership gave the Orthodox churches in question an opportunity to be seen in the West and gain contacts in the West, thus

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also raising their status back home. And the price seemed negligible. The WCC itself from the 1960s onward was becoming ever more concerned about issues like racism, liberation, and economic justice; it was especially sensitive to the strivings of churches and peoples of what was then the 'third world.' The Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe could express concern about such issues with little risk of running afoul of the Communist authorities back home—and indeed they might benefit by contributing in this way to building up a good image for the Socialist states, and possibly even a cadre of fellow travelers."

"Dialogue of Love"

At Vatican Council II, the Catholic Church became ecumenically assertive; soon mutual anathemas between East and West were consigned to the memory hole and a "dialogue of love" was proclaimed. With both Catholics and the WCC, the Orthodox produced promising ecumenical statements. "But on the Orthodox side at least," says Erickson, "this ecumenism remained at the level of professional theologians and high Church dignitaries. For the faithful in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, ecumenism brought little more than the occasional photo of the Pope greeting a prominent hierarch, or of a long row of Orthodox bishops, all with their black klobuks and jeweled panaghias and crosses, seated prominently in a WCC assembly."

Moreover, the dialogue of love had to cope with what the Orthodox call "uniatism." "Uniate" or "Eastern Catholic" refers, of course, to those Christians in the East who retained their liturgy and other practices while entering into full communion with Rome, beginning with the Union of Brest in 1596. "Uniate" is a term that is eschewed in polite ecumenical discourse today, but the Orthodox have a long history of resentment against what they view as Catholic poachers on their ecclesiastical turf. Erickson: "Given this troubled history, it is understandable why the Orthodox churches have viewed 'uniatism' as a sign of Catholic hostility towards them, as an attempt to subvert them by dividing brother from brother, and as implicit denial of their own ecclesial status. And of course it is also understandable why Eastern Catholics have resented the Orthodox for their complacent acquiescence in the suppression of the Eastern Catholic churches following World War II." He continues: "The term 'uniate' itself, once used with pride in the Roman communion, had long since come to be considered as pejorative. 'Eastern Rite Catholic' also was no longer in vogue because it might suggest that the Catholics in question differed from Latins only in the externals of worship. The council affirmed rather that Eastern Catholics constituted *churches*, whose vocation was to provide a bridge to the separated churches of the East. But if, as subsequent dialogue was emphasizing, the Orthodox churches themselves are truly 'sister churches,' already nearly at the point of full communion with the Roman Church, what rationale—apart from purely pastoral concern for Christians who might otherwise feel alienated and possibly betrayed—can there be for the continued existence of such 'bridge churches'?"

Animus is exacerbated by the demand of Eastern Catholics that their property, expropriated by Stalin and given to the Orthodox, be returned. The demand that all property be returned (*restitutio in integrum*) is, says Erickson, unreasonable, at least in some cases, because of demographic and other changes over the years. Then there is the matter of "proselytism." Not only Catholics but armies of Protestant evangelizers, mainly backed by the religious groups in the U.S., are, claim the Orthodox, failing to recognize that there is an indigenous Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe. In what Erickson calls "ecumenism as we knew it," the Orthodox acknowledged that, while Orthodoxy actualizes the one true Church, there was a possibility of dialogue with other churches aiming at greater unity and fuller communion. Erickson writes: "But not all Orthodox would agree with these assumptions. Some would take Orthodox claims to be the one true Church in an exclusive rather than an inclusive sense, so that outside the canonical limits of the Orthodox Church as we currently perceive them there is simply undifferentiated darkness, in which the Pope is no better than a witch doctor. How are we to evaluate these conflicting views? The exclusive view today claims to represent true Orthodoxy, traditional Orthodoxy. In fact—as I could argue at greater length—this 'traditionalist' view is a relatively recent phenomenon, basically an eighteenth-century reaction to the equally exclusive claims advanced by the Roman Catholic Church in that period. Nevertheless this view has gained wide currency over the last decade."

Capitulation Charged

So who is pushing this very untraditional traditionalism? "What is important to note is that those most committed to the 'traditionalism' they preach are not pious old ethnics and émigrés but more often zealous converts to Orthodoxy. Like Western converts to Buddhism and other more or less exotic religions (New Age, Native American . . .), these converts are attracted by their new faith's spirituality, which seems so unlike what the West today has to offer. They also are especially quick to adopt those elements which

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they deem most distinctive, most anti-Western, about their new faith—not just prayer ropes and headcoverings but also an exclusive, sectarian view of the Church that in fact is quite at odds with historic Orthodoxy. Superficially their message, proclaimed on numerous websites, may seem to be at one with that of the established, 'canonical' Orthodox churches—at one with some of the statements of Patriarch Bartholomew or the Russian Orthodox Church, which, as we have seen, have been critical of the WCC and the Vatican. But in fact their message is different, even radically different. Their message, in my opinion, is more a product of the late-modern or postmodern West than an expression of historic Eastern Christianity. According to them, *any* participation in or involvement with the WCC or similar bodies represents a capitulation to the panheresy of ecumenism; Orthodoxy's claim to be the one true Church is relativized, a 'branch theory' of the Church is tacitly accepted, and church canons against prayer with heretics are repeatedly violated in practice and in principle."

Breakthrough—and Alarm

During centuries of polemics, Rome tended to present itself as "the Universal Church," and the only thing for others to do was to come home to Rome. In an earlier time, East and West recognized one another as "sister churches," and that understanding, especially on the part of Rome, is making a comeback, most notably with the pontificate of John Paul II. Erickson writes: "Significantly, the expression 'sister church' did not cease to be used for the Western Church even after full eucharistic communion ended. For example, in 1948 Patriarch Alexei I of Moscow—certainly no great friend of the Roman Catholic Church—nevertheless could refer to it as a 'sister church.' What is remarkable about the use of the expression since 1963, when Patriarch Athenagoras I and Pope Paul VI reintroduced it into modern Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue, is not that the Orthodox should use it with reference to the Roman Church but that Rome should use it with reference to the Orthodox churches. While the precise significance and practical implications of the expression have not been fully explored—it is not, after all, a technical term in canon law—it must be acknowledged that its use by modern popes represents a remarkable breakthrough in Orthodox-Catholic relations."

It is precisely that breakthrough that alarms the untraditional traditionalists in Orthodoxy. Many of them, Erickson notes, are drawing their polemical ammunition from apocalyptic Protestant "Bible prophecy" sources on the Internet and elsewhere. Traditionalist Orthodox employ these sources to depict everything from the New World Order and the use of contraceptives and implanted microchips to the papal "Antichrist" as signs of the final catastrophe from which their version of Orthodoxy is the only refuge. This accent on the Orthodox difference, Erickson says, has undermined ecumenism "as we knew it." "The modern self-confidence which gave rise to the ecumenical movement in the first place—confidence in the possibility of reaching agreement and achieving unity through dialogue, common reflection, and common action—has given way to postmodern self-doubt. We are in the midst of a radical decentering in which many new voices are clamoring for recognition—and on the religious scene this means not only traditionalists and fundamentalists but also contextual theologies of many sorts. In principle this decentering should help us appreciate diversity and facilitate dialogue. But this does not seem to be happening. Instead we seem to be entering the age of the parallel monologue. What counts are my own people, my own tradition, my own group, my own orientation. Those formed by other contexts may be tolerated or even honored with faint words of praise, but they are, as it were, 'ontologically different' (to quote Patriarch Bartholomew's Georgetown speech once again). They are, for me, spiritually empty. No solid basis exists for dialogue, communication, and communion."

What has happened to Orthodoxy and ecumenism is, of course, taking place within a cultural milieu in which all differences are fundamental, and fundamental differences are assumed to be insurmountable. Erickson reports, "Recently I was speaking to a Serbian Orthodox student from Bosnia Herzegovina. He kept insisting, 'You here in the West just do not understand our situation.' He really was saying, 'You *cannot* understand our situation—so uniquely painful is it. You—in your very different situation—are incapable of understanding our situation.' These days many people are saying much the same thing: women, gays, people of color, the poor, those marginalized in various ways, and even white males of the West whose position in the world now seems threatened. We are all tempted to say, 'I am situated within a unique interpretive community. I have no need for dialogue with you or anyone else. Indeed, no basis exists for dialogue with you.'"

Waiting a Thousand Years

Erickson's conclusion offers nought for our comfort: "We may still be convinced of the desirability of Christian unity. We may even be convinced of the need for Christian unity. But how convinced are we of the

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possibility of Christian unity? How many of us really believe that in Christ, crucified and risen, it is possible for us to overcome division, to understand each other's situation, to make each other's pain and joy our own? These are the some of the questions that face each of us involved in the ecumenical movement today."

Erickson's essay is remarkably candid and more than bracing. It goes a long way to explain the nonresponse, indeed hostility, of the Russian Church and others to the unprecedented initiatives of John Paul II. In the 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May be One), the Pope invited others to join in rethinking the function of the papal office itself, suggesting that reconciliation is more important than questions of jurisdiction. As one Orthodox theologian told me, "We've been waiting a thousand years for a pope to say what he is saying. Now this Pope has said it, and we act as though nothing has happened."

It is safe to say that the dearest hope of this Pope for his pontificate has been ecclesial reconciliation with the Orthodox, so that, as he has often put it, "the Church may again breathe with both lungs, East and West." It is also safe to say that such reconciliation will not happen on his watch. That is very sad. We must hope, however, that the initiatives taken since the Second Vatican Council (and there have also been constructive initiatives from the Orthodox side), combined with a revival of an authentically traditional ecclesiology among the Orthodox, will in the years to come move us beyond "ecumenism as we have known it," and beyond "parallel monologues," to the fulfillment of Our Lord's prayer, *Ut unum sint*. For all the reasons that Prof. Erickson discusses, that seems at present to be a wan hope. But then, we Christians were long ago given our instructions, and warned that we would have to walk by faith and not by sight.

FT

THE BEST BIOETHICISTS THAT MONEY CAN BUY

"A bioethicist is to ethics what a whore is to sex." That judgment by a friend who was once viewed as a pioneer of bioethics may seem somewhat harsh, but it is not entirely off the mark. This really happened: Some years ago I was on a panel at the big annual economic conference in Davos, Switzerland. Also on the panel was Nobel Laureate James Watson, then head of the Human Genome Project. I and a few others—well, I think it was one other—were pressing moral questions about the technological manipulation of human nature. Impatient with that line of inquiry, Dr. Watson—who seems not only to subscribe to but to devoutly celebrate what Jacques Ellul called the Technological Imperative—explained that nobody should worry about the morality of what they were doing since the project had allocated millions of additional dollars "to get the best ethicists that money can buy."

A number of publications have in recent months raised sharp questions about the biotech industry and its connections with the sub-industry of bioethics. For the most part, bioethicists are in the business of issuing permission slips for whatever the technicians want to do. After all, they are in their pay. Arthur Caplan, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Bioethics and perhaps the most quoted bioethicist in the business, thinks that criticism is unfair. He says that possible conflicts of interest can be "managed." He funnels money from companies such as Pfizer, DuPont, and Celera into his center, and says he is amazed by colleagues who suggest that bioethicists should do pro bono work for wealthy corporations. Why do it free when they'll pay good money for it? *U.S. News & World Report* says that the biomedical industry is pouring millions into bioethics centers, and rewarding academic bioethicists with stock options worth many thousands of dollars. The same ethicists are quoted daily in the media, testify in Congress, and generally assure the public that there's nothing to worry about so long as scientific innovations are accompanied by appropriate expressions of concern by professional handwringers. "It's an odd development," says *U.S. News*, "for a profession that has no formal education or licensing requirements."

Wesley J. Smith is author of *Culture of Death: The Assault on Medical Ethics in America*. He writes, "The bioethicists have set themselves up, almost like Napoleon crowning himself emperor, as the arbiters of what is moral and ethical in health care." Daniel Callahan is cofounder of the Hastings Center, an institution that laid the groundwork for bioethics back in the sixties. "This is a semi-scandalous situation for my field," he says. "These companies are smart enough to know that there are a variety of views on these subjects, and with a little bit of asking or shopping around you can find a group that will be congenial to what you are doing." Carl Elliott, who succeeded Arthur Caplan at the University of Minnesota's Center for Bioethics, says, "Personally, it seems too much like bribery. If it's not bribery, it becomes the perception of bribery." Caplan, on the other hand, says that apparent conflicts of interest are comparable to the problems of magazines that accept paid advertising. The main problem with corporate

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money in bioethics, he says, is that there's not enough of it. Eli Lilly stopped funding the Hastings Center when its publication criticized Prozac, a Lilly product.

"There's a risk that this kind of funding could reduce the critical edge of the field," says Dartmouth's Ronald Green, who chairs the ethics board at Advanced Cell Technology (ACT). ACT knows all about the cutting edge, having been at the center of recent "breakthroughs" in human cloning. As does Professor Green, who, in his extensive writing, has "redefined" death, birth, life, and the meaning of the universe, among other things. Like Prof. Caplan, he recognizes that there is a risk, but is sure it can be managed. He has, by his lights, managed very successfully. Minnesota's Carl Elliott says the big danger is not that bioethicists get rich from companies but that they are, whether they know it or not, used. "Bioethics boards look like watchdogs," he says, "but they are used like show dogs."

Nigel Cameron, a bioethicist working with Charles Colson's Wilberforce Forum, notes that bioethics is not what one would ordinarily call a discipline or profession. "Most bioethicists don't train in bioethics. They move sideways from other disciplines—law, theology, medicine, philosophy." The field is "perfectly designed to be the midwife for the birth of a whole posthuman future." He notes that ethics as ordinarily understood—classical ethics, if you will—works from rules or principles to guide moral judgment. "Bioethics doesn't like being locked into any kind of framework that would involve predictability. From a Christian or traditional perspective, it isn't ethics at all, but uses items from the ethics toolbox so it can do what it wants in any situation." William Saletan, a writer for the online magazine *Slate*, sums it up: "The slickest way to make yourself look ethical is to narrow the definition of ethics so that it won't interfere with what you want to do. But that won't make you ethical. It'll just make you an ethicist."

So what is to be done? Certainly biomedicine and biotechnology call for the most careful moral scrutiny. But whose scrutiny is to be trusted? Nobody comes to these questions, or any questions of importance, with a value-free or value-neutral perspective. But some are free of clear conflicts of interest, unlike the ethical pipers who sing the tunes of the companies that pay them. Their promiscuously issued permission slips would license almost anything, and the slips are typically accompanied by promissory notes that this innovation or that will lead to a cure for everything from Alzheimer's and cancer to the heartbreak of psoriasis. Such promises are powerfully appealing, including, as proposed at a recent University of Pennsylvania conference, the promise of immortality.

Never mind that extravagant promissory notes have been issued for decades and are almost never redeemed. Those at the cutting edge assure us that the decisive breakthrough is just on the other side of the line that it was previously forbidden to cross. The biotech industry is driven by scientific curiosity, no doubt, but most importantly by the prospect of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. How many people of great means would be willing to pay how much for an extra ten, twenty, maybe fifty years of life? How much for the promise of immortality? And what moral lines would they, and those who make such promises, not be prepared to cross?

In real ethics, there are some things that must never be done. Bioethics is "procedural." Where it can, it leaps ahead, and where it cannot, it inches ahead, enticed onward by the question, Why not? If it can be done it should be done, or in any event it will be done, and, if it will be done, why not by us rather than by the competition? This is ethical reasoning of a very low order. There is no sure way of protecting society against it. But we might begin by asking the experts who advocate the crossing of the next moral line, What's in it for you? (See While We're At It, p. 80, for related news about the President's Council on Bioethics.)

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THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

It has been a while since the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued *Dominus Iesus* (The Lord Jesus) in September 2000, but the ecumenical bruises still show. In the general media, most of the headlines were variations on "Rome Says Catholicism is Only True Church." I discussed and defended *Dominus Iesus* in these pages (see "To Say Jesus is Lord," November 2000), and also noted that it was welcomed by some Protestants as a clear affirmation of core Christian doctrines. At the same time, and in retrospect, it is evident that some misunderstandings might have been avoided. Father Jared Wicks of the Gregorian University in Rome writes in *Ecumenical Trends* that the document needs to be read alongside the 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May be One). "It is not the case," says the encyclical, "that beyond the boundaries of the Catholic community there is an ecclesial vacuum." Elements of God's justifying and sanctifying grace are to be found there, and "To the extent that these elements are found in the other

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Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them." There can be only one Church of Christ because there is only one Christ, and the Church is, according to the New Testament, his body. The teaching of the Second Vatican Council is that that one Church "subsists in" the Catholic Church, but the Catholic Church does not exhaust the reality of the one Church of Christ.

The Res Tantum

Fr. Wicks puts the crucial point this way: "In order to be heard more clearly by members of the other Christian Churches and communities, Catholic ecumenists can well make explicit something not said in *Dominus Iesus.* This is that being or not being 'Church in the proper sense' stands in the realm of the sacramental and structural expression of ecclesiality and mediation of salvation in the world. Here, the others know well our Catholic convictions, both those concerning fullness of mediatory means in our Church, however imperfectly we are actually formed and sanctified by them, and those about the *defectus* (flaws, lacks) found in their mediatory structures and sacraments. But the mediations of sanctification in Christ which the ecclesial communities do cherish and actualize, as in baptism, proclamation of the gospel of salvation, etc., do *not* mediate to them a *defective* justification and salvation. Using sacramental terminology, the *res tantum* is given whole and entire, namely, union with Christ, life in the Spirit, and access to the Father."

I am regularly asked why, if the Catholic Church teaches that it is not necessary to salvation, one should become a Catholic. There are many possible responses to that question. The Second Vatican Council's constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (Light to the Nations), says that *if* one believes that the Catholic Church is what she claims to be, then one is bound in conscience to enter into and remain in full communion with her. In other words, it is then a matter of salvation. The Catholic Church may be defined as the Church of Jesus Christ most fully and rightly ordered through time. Since to be a Christian means living in obedience to Christ, and since Christ instituted the apostolic ordering of his Church as it is to be found uniquely in the Catholic Church, it follows that obedience to Christ entails being and remaining in full communion with the Catholic Church. It also follows that not being in full communion is disobedience to Christ. *If,* that is, one believes that the Catholic Church is what she claims to be.

As I say, there are many other possible, and important, answers to the question why one should be a Catholic, but that is the one that goes to the heart of the matter. Let me anticipate another frequently asked question, Why not Orthodoxy? The communion between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church is so close that it might be said that the only thing that is lacking for full communion is full communion. But, if one believes that Christ's institution of his one Church includes the Petrine Ministry, then it follows that it is necessary to be in full communion with the bishops, the successors of the apostles, who are in full communion with the Bishop of Rome, the successor of Peter. If one believes none of these things, there may be other good reasons for becoming a Catholic, but it would seem that they are not binding in conscience. Of course, one is bound in conscience to try to discern whether these things are true, and to act on the truth that one is able to discern.

Now I have gone quite beyond Fr. Wicks' helpful clarification of *Dominus Iesus.* And the twists and turns, the eccentric starts and stops, the dead-ends and disturbing discoveries in following the Spirit's lead are not so neatly logical or doctrinally deductive as my brief response may suggest. As with any life-defining decision, it is also the case that the heart has its reasons of which reason does not know. But this is intended as no more than a brief response to questions often asked—questions that are not, you will perhaps agree, unrelated to *Dominus Iesus,* to what it means to say that Jesus is Lord.

FT

Fare Thee Well, Tony Lewis

It hardly seems possible that I have been reading Anthony Lewis for thirty-two years. In fact, I haven't been. I stopped reading him regularly about twenty years ago. True, doing my morning penance with the *New York Times,* I would glance at his column to see what had set off today's snit, and sometimes I would even read the column, merely to confirm that, once you knew the occasion for his unhappiness, you knew what he would say without reading the column. But here is the final column, "Hail and Farewell," and I felt I owed the man a last read. "As I look back at those turbulent decades," he writes, "I see a time of challenge to a basic tenet of modern society: faith in reason." Tony Lewis, we are given to understand, has been, over all these years, the champion of faith in reason.

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Now the challenge to his faith, he says, comes from religious "fundamentalism"—not only of the Muslim variety but also in the form of "fundamentalist Christians, believing that the Bible's story of creation is the literal truth." Drop the Muslim reference, and the column might almost have been written in the 1920s at the height of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. In terms of ideas, not much has happened in Tony Lewis' world. He seems quite unaware of postmodernism's perspectivisms, historicisms, and anti-foundationalisms that are today's chief intellectual challengers to his understanding of reason. Those whom Lewis calls fundamentalists even question "the scientific method that has made contemporary civilization possible." Richard Rorty, call your office.

Lewis then shifts to the American Founders, who, he says, "put their faith not in men but in law, the law of the Constitution." So it is not men who had faith in reason but "law and the Constitution [that] have kept America whole and free." Except, of course, for the Sedition Act of 1798, the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II, and the "fear of communism [that] brought the abuses of McCarthyism." Tony Lewis, let it be said, never suffered from the fear of communism. For him, the Great Terror has always been the threat of American fascism, against which he postured himself and his corporate employer, the *Times*, as brave dissidents in the fight for intellectual freedom. He concludes his farewell with this: "In the end I believe that faith in reason will prevail. But it will not happen automatically. Freedom under law is hard work," and so forth. Well, you can see why, over all those years, one felt no qualms about skipping the column.

In the following Sunday's issue there was an extended interview with Lewis on what he had learned during his thirty-two years of explaining the world to the readers of the *Times*. The gist of it is that way back then he had thought that, after the Holocaust, people had learned that evil was a very bad thing, but very bad things are still happening, and it has shaken his faith that history is the story of human progress. With such hard-earned wisdom, and a little more attentiveness to ideas that have appeared on the scene since his discovery of the dangers of those who "question Darwin," it seems that Tony Lewis might at long last be prepared to write a column for a paper so influential as the *Times*. Yet Lewis is not sure. His, we are given to understand, is the mode of honest and therefore tentative inquiry. He says in the interview, "Certainty is the enemy of decency and humanity in people who are sure they are right, like Osama bin Laden and John Ashcroft." Presumably he is not sure that he is right about the exactness of the moral equivalence between the terrorist murderer and the attorney general.

Security Blanket

The *Times* is distinctive, although not necessarily in the way its editors may think. The editorials and op-ed page of the *Times* are monothematically left-liberal. Among its columnists, there is not one centrist or conservative. Yes, William Safire is sometimes called a conservative, but he is a self-described libertarian. On the social and moral questions that most importantly define our politics, the voices of the *Times* are univocally on the left. The *Washington Post*, by way of contrast, is editorially much less strident, and has regular columnists such as George F. Will, Michael Kelly, and Charles Krauthammer. This makes the opinion pages of the *Post* considerably more interesting. It is a liberal paper that knows it must engage opposing arguments. The *Times*, on the other hand, is a smug and self-contained world, run by people who seem truly to believe that not only do they publish all the news fit to print but also all the views fit to print, and that what they publish defines what is fit.

"In the end I believe that faith in reason will prevail," writes Tony Lewis in his farewell column. As with the paper of which he was quintessentially part, almost never in all those years was there a hint of intellectual curiosity about whether there might be a difference—or even an at least theoretical distinction—between his habits of opinion and the conclusions mandated by reason. To a reflexively left-liberal readership, Mr. Lewis provided a regular checklist of what reasonable people thought. For them, it must have made his column a comfort, a kind of intellectual security blanket, during what he calls those turbulent decades. For others of us, it was a good enough reason for skipping his part of the daily penance that is reading the *Times*.

FT

FEATHERS OF SCANDAL

The story is told of St. Philip Neri (1515-1595) that he gave a most unusual penance to a novice who was guilty of spreading malicious gossip. He told him to take a feather pillow to the top of a church tower on a blustery day and there release all the feathers to the wind. Then he was to come down from the tower, collect all the feathers dispersed over the far

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countryside, and put them back into the pillow. Of course the poor novice couldn't do it, and that was precisely Philip's point about the great evil of tale bearing. Slander and calumny have a way of spreading to the four winds and, once released, can never be completely recalled. Even when accusations are firmly nailed as false, the reputations of those falsely accused bear a lingering taint. "Oh yes," it is vaguely said, "wasn't he once accused of . . . "

The words of the Bard that you learned in grade school are entirely to the point:

> Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
> 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
> But he that filches from me my good name
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed.

This reflection is occasioned by an attack on Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, the eighty-two-year-old and much revered founder of the Legionaries of Christ, one of the more vibrant and successful renewal movements in contemporary Catholicism. The attack, alleging sexual offenses with seminarians some forty years earlier, first appeared in a 1997 story in the *Hartford Courant*, a Connecticut paper, and the story has recently been repeated in the *National Catholic Reporter*, a left-wing tabloid. The story was coauthored by Jason Berry, a freelance writer in New Orleans, who briefly gained national attention with a 1992 book, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children*, and by Gerald Renner, who was until recently religion writer for the Connecticut paper.

I hesitate to write about this, lest I be responsible for further disseminating what I heartily deplore. But the purpose is to collect and properly dispose of these feathers of scandal. I admit to being surprised that some of them have found their way into quarters usually averse to vicious gossip. Also, this reflection might be helpful in evaluating other stories of clerical sexual scandal, stories that reached a crescendo with what everybody came to recognize as the slanderous charges against the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago and that have since then been on the wane.

We should have no illusion that such scandal is a thing of the past, however, as witness the recent court proceedings against a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston. Such incidents are grist for the mills of liberals pressing for married priests and of others demanding that bishops exercise a stricter discipline. And, of course, they feed the media mill that, as Philip Jenkins has explained, is not deterred by the fact that the incidence of sexual abuse is probably higher among Protestant clergy and other professionals working with children (see "The Uses of Clerical Scandal," FT, February 1996). Stories about Catholic priests have a certain cachet—and, for trial lawyers, a promise of cash—that is usually lacking in other cases. It is, I think, unseemly for Catholics to complain about that. Catholics should expect more of their leaders. Even one instance of abuse constitutes an intolerable offense against the victim and a breaking of most solemn vows freely undertaken.

Having said that, I expect that most readers, and especially those who, with good reason, admire the Legionaries, instinctively recoil from the story about Fr. Maciel, finding it both repugnant and implausible. There is something to be said for consigning it to the trash bin and forgetting about it. Nobody should feel obliged to read on, for the subject is decidedly distasteful. At the same time, the story is out there, and—as Berry and Renner and the complicit publications surely intended—it has no doubt done some damage. Forty and fifty years after the alleged misdeeds, there is no question of criminal action. Even were there any merit to the charges, which I am convinced there is not, the statute of limitations has long since run out. And what can you do to an eighty-two-year-old priest who has been so successful in building a movement of renewal and is strongly supported and repeatedly praised by, among many others, Pope John Paul II? What you can try to do is to filch from him his good name. And by destroying the reputation of the order's founder you can try to discredit what Catholics call the founding "charism" of the movement, thus undermining support for the Legionaries of Christ.

The Power of Envy

Berry and Renner do not even try to hide their hostility to the Legion. Their story introduces the movement as "a wealthy religious order known for its theological conservatism and loyalty to the Pope." In the world of Berry, Renner, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and the *Courant* (at least when Renner was writing for it), that is another way of saying that the Legion is the enemy. Nobody would dispute that Legionaries are theologically orthodox and loyal to the Pope. Some of us take the perhaps eccentric view that that is a virtue. As for the order being wealthy, that hardly seems the right word. The Legion has been very successful in eliciting the support of admirers for its many enterprises. Its most notable success has been in vocations to the priesthood. There are now about five hundred priests and twenty-five hundred seminarians, and the order is active in twenty countries on four continents, with schools in Latin America, Europe,

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and the U.S. In Latin America, the order is doing pioneering work in running schools and microeconomic development projects among the poor. Regnum Christi, a lay movement associated with the Legion, is also vibrant and growing.

There is no doubt that the many works of the movement require major resources, and that it is effective in raising money. But wealthy? One might as well say that the financially strapped Archdiocese of New York is wealthy because it could, after all, get untold millions by demolishing St. Patrick's Cathedral and selling the property to developers. Or the Society of Jesus is wealthy because it could sell off Georgetown, Fordham, Boston College, and twenty-plus other Jesuit schools in this country alone. The fact is that the Legionaries of Christ are strikingly successful at a time when many other orders are languishing or even dying out. Also in the Church, alas, it is unwise to underestimate the power of envy. Slanderous attacks on new and vibrant religious orders are nothing new in the history of the Church. See St. Francis and the Franciscans, Dominic and the Dominicans, or Ignatius and the early Jesuits. Love, says St. Paul, "is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right." The unedifying but unsurprising truth is that, also in the Church, love is sometimes in short supply, and there is rejoicing at wrongs, and at alleged wrongs.

Recruited to a Cause

I am not neutral about the Legionaries. I have spent time with Fr. Maciel, and he impresses me as a man who combines uncomplicated faith, gentle kindness, military self-discipline, and a relentless determination to do what he believes God has called him to do. They are the qualities one would expect of someone who at age twenty-one in Mexico vowed to do something great for Christ and his Church, and has been allowed to do it. In the language of the tradition, they are qualities associated with holiness; in his case a virile holiness of tenacious resolve that has been refined in the fires of frequent opposition and misunderstanding.

And I am impressed by the words of Jesus that "by their fruits you shall know them." I have known the Legion for some years now, speaking at their institutions in this country and, most recently, teaching a crash course on Catholic social doctrine at their new university in Rome, Regina Apostolorum. There were about sixty students in the course, almost all priests or seminarians, and I have never encountered anywhere a group of students more eager, articulate, or intellectually astute. And yes, they are orthodox and excited by the truth of the Church's teaching. Critics who depict Legionaries as pious brainwashed zombies walking in lockstep under an authoritarian regime are, in my experience, preposterously wrong. As you might expect, given the name of the order, they do have a soldierly bearing, as though recruited to a great cause, which they have been. The single most striking characteristic of Legionaries, as I have encountered them in this country and elsewhere, is their palpable sense of joy and high adventure in their calling to be faithful priests.

It is said that the Legion is elitist. And I suppose there is something to that, keeping in mind that elitism is too often employed as a term of opprobrium by those offended by the violation of the mediocre. There is no doubt that Legionaries think they are part of something very special—as do all young people who surrender themselves to a great vision that is attended by demanding discipline. It was once true of those who entered the Society of Jesus, and still is true of some who, in the radically reduced number entering that order, are determined to revive the Ignatian charism. The leaders of the Legion strongly discourage comparisons with the earlier Society of Jesus, precisely because they know that such comparisons are so frequently made and have excited Jesuit hostility from the early days in Mexico to the present. But yes, there is a tone of elitism among Legionaries. At least as I read it, it is not a sense of sinful pride but of being privileged to be part of something so great in its challenge and promise. For them, to be a Legionary priest has a distinct panache, but it is panache in the service of achieving the pinnacle, which is to be—radically and without remainder—a priest of Christ and his Church.

In any course so demanding, it is inevitable that many do not make it. Others, having become priests, fall by the wayside or are found wanting. The result—and this is true of any community that does not fudge the distinction between success and failure—is that there are some who are disappointed, disgruntled, aggrieved, and bitter. And that brings us to the Berry/Renner story about Fr. Maciel. You don't want to know the specifics of the charges, although Berry/Renner go into salacious detail about rude things allegedly done with young men, things that have become all too familiar from sex abuse stories of recent decades. Nine now elderly men who were once part of the Legion—two Spaniards and seven Mexicans—claim that in the 1950s Fr. Maciel more or less regularly abused them, and that this was a pattern pervasive throughout the order. Berry/Renner acknowledge that one of the accusers has recanted his story under oath, testifying that he was put up to telling tales by ringleaders who had for many years been trying to get other disaffected Legionaries to

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join in "showing up" Fr. Maciel. The fact that he has recanted his original charges does not prevent Berry/Renner from repeating them with what appears to be prurient relish. It is not the kind of stuff you would find in any mainstream media, but then Berry and Renner are not practitioners of what is ordinarily meant by responsible journalism. Berry's business is Catholic scandal and sensationalism. That is what he does. Renner's tour at the *Courant* was marked by an animus against things Catholic, an animus by no means limited to the Legion.

A Sinister Institution

Nonetheless, because I care about the Legion and because I was outraged by what I suspected was a gross injustice, I decided to go through endless pages of testimony, counter-testimony, legal documents, and other materials related to the Berry/Renner attack on Fr. Maciel. It was not an edifying experience. For Berry/Renner, it is worth noting, the case of Fr. Maciel is not all that important in itself, but it serves another purpose. "To many," they write in the recent *NCR* article, "the case against Maciel is important because it tests the Vatican's resolve to pursue charges related to sexual misconduct at the highest levels of the Church." The "many" includes, first of all, Berry and Renner. That is clearly the reason for the latest re-raking of the muck of their 1997 article. They report nothing substantively new in the allegations themselves; the only new thing is that the Vatican has again considered the charges and found them without merit. A cardinal in whom I have unbounded confidence and who has been involved in the case tells me that the charges are "pure invention, without the slightest foundation."

For Berry/Renner, however, the Vatican is a sinister and oppressive institution. Its stated concerns for confidentiality and fairness are, in their view, code language for secretiveness and evasion. Statements of church officials are never to be taken at face value, and certainly never to be given the benefit of the doubt. Let it be said that there have been instances in which church authorities have been less than straightforward, to put it gently. But for Berry/Renner, systematic mendacity is assumed. That the Pope consistently and strongly supports Fr. Maciel and the Legion is only evidence that he has been duped—or, the reader is invited to infer, that he is party to a cover-up. Nothing will satisfy them but that the Church comply with their prescribed procedures of investigation and, not incidentally, vindicate their sensationalist reporting. So much for the prejudices and purposes of Berry and Renner. In sum, they are in the scandal business.

With Moral Certainty

So what is a person who does not share their prejudices and purposes to believe? I can only say why, after a scrupulous examination of the claims and counterclaims, I have arrived at *moral certainty* that the charges are false and malicious. I cannot know with cognitive certainty what did or did not happen forty, fifty, or sixty years ago. No means are available to reach legal certainty (beyond a reasonable doubt). Moral certainty, on the other hand, is achieved by considering the evidence in light of the Eighth Commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." On that basis, I believe the charges against Fr. Maciel and the Legion are false and malicious and should be given no credence whatsoever.

Recall the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in explanation of the Eighth Commandment:

> *Respect for the reputation of persons* forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury. He becomes guilty:
>
> — of *rash judgment* who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor;
>
> — of *detraction* who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's fault and failings to persons who did not know them;
>
> — of *calumny* who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.

It counts as evidence that Fr. Maciel unqualifiedly and totally denies the charges. It counts as evidence that priests in the Legion whom I know very well and who, over many years, have a detailed knowledge of Fr. Maciel and the Legion say that the charges are diametrically opposed to everything they know for certain. It counts as evidence that Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and others who have looked into the matter say that the charges are completely without merit. It counts as evidence that Pope John Paul II, who almost certainly is aware of the charges, has strongly, consistently, and publicly praised Fr. Maciel and the Legion. Much of what we know we take on trust. I trust these people. The suggestion that they are either deliberately deceiving or are duped is totally implausible.

It counts as evidence that opponents of Fr. Maciel and his work succeeded in having him removed from the governance of the Legion for more than two years

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in the 1950s. At that time he was charged with drug addiction and misrule of the order. The Vatican appointed four impartial "visitators" who lived with the Legionaries and interviewed every one of them privately and under oath. They were asked to state anything they knew to the detriment of Fr. Maciel's leadership. Not once, not even once, was there any mention of sex abuse or anything related to it. Fr. Maciel was completely exonerated and, with high praise, restored to the leadership of the order by the Holy See.

The accusers say they did not mention sex abuse at the time because it was a "taboo" subject and they were afraid of Fr. Maciel. The ringleaders who organized the 1990s campaign against Fr. Maciel, however, were not afraid to make other grave charges. Some had long-standing grievances arising from being removed from positions of trust in the order; all left the order under unhappy circumstances. The question of sex only came up later, when sexual abuse by priests was a topic of frenzied interest in the media and such a charge was viewed as lethal to a priestly reputation. The motives of the accusers are the subject of speculation, but the purpose of the accusations is, beyond doubt, to do grave damage to Fr. Maciel and the Legion. Although solicited by the ringleaders to join in the charges, others who were members of the order at the time in question have refused and have emphatically denied the claims of the accusers. They were there at the time. They would have known.

Picking Up Feathers

Common sense is also entered into evidence. Is it believable that, as alleged, a pathological, drug-addicted child molester could have founded a religious order in the 1940s that was approved by the Church and flourished for decades, while all the time casual sodomy and other heinous sexual abuses reigned in its houses? And this without a word of concern from thousands of parents or any claim of such wrongdoing in civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical courts? It is not believable. Is it believable that men who are now accusers, who were then adult members of the order, would have testified under oath to Fr. Maciel's uprightness, thus lying to their highest superiors in the Holy See and refusing to mention years of abuse by a drug-addicted molester who had been removed as head of the order? It is not believable. The accusations are odious, as are the actions of those who continue to peddle them.

The accusers may say that they are seeking justice or, in the psychobabble of our time, looking for "closure." I cannot plumb their motives. I do not know what grievances, grudges, or vendettas are in play here, or what memories or "recovered memories" are reflected in the accusations. The accusers are not going to court to seek damages of any sort. That is not a possibility. The sole end served by the charges is the attempt to gravely damage the Legionaries of Christ by discrediting their founder.

I am confident they will not succeed in that attempt. Because the accusations are false, and will be recognized as such by any fair-minded person who bothers to look into them. And because the Legionaries are so manifestly, capably, and joyfully determined to pursue their apostolate, undistracted by the opposition that is predictably encountered by any young and vigorous movement of renewal. To be sure, there are still those feathers of scandal scattered about. St. Philip Neri was right, it is probably impossible to collect all of them. But if you come across one, just pick it up and put it in the trash where it belongs.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Here's something else from the Barna research folk in California that we really needed to know. "Pastors Rate Themselves Highly, Especially as Teachers." A national survey of senior pastors of Protestant congregations revealed that they think they are really good at preaching, teaching, encouraging, and pastoring, and that they think themselves least effective in raising funds. The first thought is of those international surveys showing that American students are consistently at the top of the heap in self-esteem, and often near the bottom in achievement. The second is that, if these pastors are so good at preaching, teaching, and encouraging, might not that show up in, among other things, generous giving? Don't get me wrong. I'm not proposing anything so crass as "the bottom line" as the test of ministry. But it does seem that the justification of self-esteem should not be by faith alone.

■ Alison Hornstein, a student at Yale, has this column in *Newsweek* about how she is sick and tired of faculty and students who, in the name of multiculturalism and other mental retardations, excuse terrorist attacks on civilization. She concludes: "Just as we should pass absolute moral judgment in the case of rape, we should recognize that some actions are objectively bad, despite differences in cultural standards and values. To me, hijacking planes and killing thousands of civilians

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falls into this category." Columnist Michael Kelly is encouraged, but thinks Ms. Hornstein is not there yet. "Hurrah! A breakthrough! A moral judgment! Yes, Ms. Hornstein, murdering thousands of people in fact is bad. But wait. A lifetime of instruction is not sloughed off quite so easily as all that; Hornstein's bold moral judgment is not quite so bold as all that. Look at her conclusion again: 'To me,' it begins. *To me.* Hijacking planes and killing thousands is not objectively bad after all. It is objectively bad only in Hornstein's opinion. Indeed, she rushes to reassure on this point: 'Others may disagree.' *Others may disagree.* And she adds: 'It is less important to me where people choose to draw the line than it is that they are willing to draw it at all.' Oh, dear. It is astonishing, really. Here you have an obviously smart, obviously moral person trying nobly and painfully to think her way out of the intellectual and moral cul-de-sac in which the addled miseducation of her life has placed her—and she cannot, in the end, bear to do it. She cannot judge. Ms. Hornstein, push on. Go the last mile. Go out on the limb of judgment. Mass murder is indeed objectively bad—and not just in your opinion. Others may disagree—but they are wrong. Indeed, they are (shut the door for this part, lest the hall monitors catch us) *morally* wrong. Ms. Hornstein, it is not less important where people choose to draw the line as long as they will draw it somewhere; that puts you right back with your silly professors. Draw the line, Ms. Hornstein. Draw it where you know it belongs. Dare to judge."

■ Readers send in their questions to Randy Cohen who writes an advice column called "The Ethicist" in the *New York Times Magazine.* The column is something like "Miss Manners" with more cerebral pretensions. When it was launched some while back, I looked at the first few columns and decided that this was an item that could be skipped without fear of intellectual or moral deprivation. But then there was the unpleasantness of Mr. Cohen's protesting my quoting here what he had written in an e-mail to a reader, so I thought I would take another look. The column at hand responds to an inquiry from a "gay teenager who only recently came out," and he wonders whether at the gym he should be showering with naked men "who have no idea that I may see some of them in a sexual way." Mr. Cohen assures him: "While you should not act toward others in ways that discomfort them—e.g., no making a crude aqua-pass at a stranger—you may give your imagination free rein. There are no thought crimes. . . . It is actions, not imagination, that ethics seeks to guide." So much for lust. Mr. Cohen continues, "Each man in your shower room knows that other men are present, and those with any knowledge of life know that some of those present may be gay. What your shower mates do not know are your thoughts—nor are they entitled to." Such are the neat resolutions provided by Mr. Cohen to New Yorkers' moral quandaries. I expect that in one of his earlier columns he has made it clear that his expertise is in ethics, not in morality, which makes such neat resolutions easier. But even ethicists informed by "any knowledge of life" might consider whether a gay man looking at naked men—or a straight man looking at naked women—and giving his imagination free rein would be entirely in control of not letting the objects of his fantasy know his thoughts. One thinks, for instance, of Augustine in *City of God*: "It is right, therefore, to be ashamed of this lust, and it is right that the members which it moves or fails to move by its own right, so to speak, and not in complete conformity to our decision, should be called *pudenda* (parts of shame), which they were not called before man's sin; for, as Scripture tells us, 'they were naked, and yet they felt no embarrassment.' This was not because they had not noticed their nakedness, but because nakedness was not yet disgraceful, because lust did not yet arouse those members independently of their decision. The flesh did not yet, in a fashion, give proof of man's disobedience by a disobedience of its own (XIV, 17)." But then, St. Augustine, who had little patience with ethical rationalizations abstracted from moral reality, knew a lot about life.

■ Play it again, Sam. Here's another bishop warning diocesan vocation directors to be on their guard against candidates for the priesthood who may be rigid or excessively orthodox. Meaning, all too often, that they may agree with the Magisterium on the impossibility of ordaining women, or hold to the extreme view that criticism of the Pope should be tempered by a modicum of deference. The bishop's warning was nicely anticipated by C. S. Lewis' Screwtape: "The use of Fashions in thought is to distract the attention of men from their real dangers. We direct the fashionable outcry of each generation against those vices of which it is least in danger and fix its approval on the virtue nearest to that vice which we are trying to make endemic. The game is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood, and all crowding to that side of the boat which is already nearly gunwale under. . . . Cruel ages are put on their guard against sentimentality, feckless and idle ones against respectability, lecherous ones against puritanism; and whenever all men are really hastening to become either slaves or tyrants we make liberalism the prime bogey."

■ All the political buzz the week of this writing is that Democratic strategists are proposing that their party

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run this year on the theme that Christian conservatives are the "American Taliban" of intolerance. In response to which a Republican friend puts on his best Br'er Rabbit act, pleading, "Please, please, don't throw me into that briar patch." The stupid party seems not to have noticed that the leader of Christian conservatives today is not Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell but a fellow by the name of George W. Bush.

■ This is one conscientious outfit. Nonetheless, we get complaints, sometimes quite vehement complaints, from, for instance, people who were told that we hoped to run their letter to the editor. But then the letter got knocked out, or substantially edited, because of space limitations. Most readers are quite understanding about this. To those who aren't: please work at it.

■ Some may find it hard to remember that on August 9 last the hottest topic in public dispute was embryonic stem cell research, that being the date and the subject of George W. Bush's first nationwide television address. We said at the time that his compromise decision—to fund research with existing stem-cell lines where the life-or-death decision had already been made but not to fund the creation of new lines—was morally defensible in principle but gravely imprudent. The good news about that address was its marvelously articulate instruction on the facts about the beginnings of human life, and the announcement that Leon Kass of the University of Chicago would head up a new President's Council on Bioethics. Now the other members of the council have been announced and some of the appointments are reassuring. Of the eighteen members, a number are very well known to the readers of these pages, notably Robert George, Mary Ann Glendon, Gilbert Meilaender, and, of course, Kass himself. Proponents of the technological imperative and those who are unfazed by the brave new world of manufacturing and redesigning humanity complain that the council is conservative. But the partisan meanings of conservative and liberal can be a distraction in this case. The real divide is between people who believe that technological and scientific challenges require a "new ethic," and those who believe that the task is to apply abiding moral truths to new circumstances. Peter Singer of Princeton—who, I quickly add, is not on the President's council—is an extreme representative of the first party. He flatly declares that the Judeo-Christian ethic is discredited, and everything must be rethought from a utilitarian square one (see "A Curious Encounter with a Philosopher from Nowhere," February). His contribution to the necessary rethinking includes the principle that it is now necessary to say that it is not always wrong, and in some cases it is necessary, to deliberately kill innocent human beings. As I say, Singer is viewed as an extremist, but there are many "moderates" who embrace his reasoning, while cloaking their conclusions in euphemisms lest they scare off the proponents of "traditional morality" who must slowly be brought along to accepting the brave new world. One of the great challenges of the President's council will be to reframe the ominous questions before us, putting the burden of proof on those who deny, rather than those who defend, principles such as the sanctity of human life. The language of secular liberalism presupposes an operational atheism in which scientific "progress" is held back by those who think that God, natural law, and moral philosophy—or all three combined—yield truths to which science and technology must be held accountable. It is encouraging that only a few of the council members are known as bioethicists, and they are exceptions to the debilitations common in that dubious but ambitious guild (see "The Best Ethicists That Money Can Buy" in Public Square). Most of the council appointees are people with a track record of scholarship, good sense, and moral wisdom, just the kind of people who are able to provide leadership in creating that much praised but seldom realized thing, public moral discourse. There are skeptics who say that the President's Council on Bioethics is an exercise in futility, a matter of putting a close watch on the barn door after the technological horses have long since bolted. We have to hope they are wrong. The membership and mandate of the council give reason for a modest hope that it may yet be possible for human beings to take moral charge of what is meant by being human.

■ Oh, what an erudite readership we have. From all directions, and citing sundry historians, comes the correction that the Polish forces, with an assist from the Germans, repelled the siege of Vienna on September 12, not September 11, 1683. Alright already. I said it was no big deal.

■ If only. If only I had been right when, in commenting on a French "wrongful life" case, I said that such lawsuits seemed to be in decline in this country. Not at all, Richard F. Collier of the Legal Center for Defense of Life in Morristown, New Jersey, informs me. He sends along material from the *New Jersey Law Journal* that includes bold advertisements by law firms specializing in what they call "wrongful birth/wrongful life," and boasting of their success in molding tort law to their advantage. Just when you thought there might be a bit of good news. . . . On the other hand, the French parliament has subsequently

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banned such suits. Watch for a more thorough treatment of all this in a forthcoming issue.

■ A few years ago, immigration restriction was a hot topic in some conservative circles. It was pushed hard by *National Review* when John O'Sullivan was editor and Peter Brimelow, author of *Alien Nation*, was the point man on the subject. Under the editorship of Rich Lowry, *National Review* has pretty much fallen silent on immigration reform, without, however, taking the position of the *Wall Street Journal* that we should abolish the borders and let everybody in. What *National Review* dropped, the *New York Review of Books* may be picking up. Christopher Jencks has a long two-part essay there ("Who Should Get In?"), suggesting that it may be time to reconsider a policy that brings in a million legal immigrants per year, and has resulted in an estimated ten million illegal immigrants living in the country. The Jencks article is remarkable in that it discusses the advocates of immigration reform without once using words such as "racist," "nativist," or "Know-Nothing." This is, I think, a welcome development. I don't know if it is a sign that the issue of immigration reform is moving from the right to the left. The article may be no more than a one-time thing with the *New York Review*. But, especially after September 11, it is inevitable that more Americans will be worrying about who all "these people" are, and whether they really intend to be part of "us." As we know from past experience, such questions are strewn with devilish landmines. It ought to be possible to have a civil discussion of the proposal that it is time for a "moratorium" or "pause" in immigration—or just the effective enforcement of existing law—in order to encourage the more effective assimilation of immigrants who are here. It is, all in all, a good thing that the immigration question is being taken seriously by people who are not easily dismissed as (because they sometimes sound like) racists, nativists, etc., etc.

■ Admittedly, it is a cultivated taste (unless you happen to be born that way), but I have come in recent years to have a great interest in things Polish, even agreeing to try to learn the language as soon as they restore those four lost vowels. My interest, of course, has everything to do with those Krakow seminars on Catholic social doctrine that we run each summer. But the reason for this item is to mention the *Polish Studies Newsletter* edited by Albin S. Wozniak (3433 Gregg Road, Brookeville, Maryland 20833), which is available for $30 per year and provides a very useful update on books, articles, debates, and cultural events dealing with things Polish. If, by inheritance or cultivation or both, such is your taste, the newsletter is definitely worth a look.

■ In science, as in every other purely human endeavor, new insights take a battering from the established orthodoxies that they threaten. Certainly that is true of Darwinism as it is challenged by alternative explanations that go under the general heading of Intelligent Design. The December 21 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* provides a balanced report from the front, "Darwinism Under Attack." The Darwinist establishment is increasingly on the defensive, as is also evident in a series of near-hysterical attacks on Intelligent Design theory in the *New York Review of Books*. A hero in all this is Phillip E. Johnson, who is not a scientist but a law professor with a razor-sharp ability to expose logical and philosophical sleight of hand. We are pleased to have published his arguments in these pages, along with those of mathematician William Dembski and biochemist Michael Behe. These are the three names most prominently associated with Intelligent Design, although others are coming over to their side and, as *Chronicle* reports, many others are acknowledging the inadequacies of Darwinist explanations. Recently, in response to a PBS series that toed the conventional Darwinist line, more than a hundred scientists signed a full-page advertisement, published in the *New Republic* and elsewhere, declaring that they are "skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life." We will continue to publish Johnson, Behe, Dembski, et alia, although I know it makes some readers nervous. In the minds of many, the brightest of bright lines that distinguish the intellectually sophisticated from the great unwashed was drawn at the Scopes trial in Tennessee in 1925. When it comes to cultural and academic respectability, Christians who are insecure about what they view as their newly won "place at the table" are terrified that they might be suspected of harboring "creationist" sympathies. They should get over it. The long overdue scientific and philosophical challenge to Darwinism is not in the defense of a literal reading of Genesis; it is in the service of clear thinking. With respect to the origin and complex development of life forms, clear thinking begins with recognizing what we do not know. Dembski puts it nicely: "An argument from ignorance is still better than a pipe dream in which you're deluding yourself. I'm at least admitting to ignorance as opposed to pretending that you've solved the problem when you haven't." The Darwinist theory of the survival of the fittest is sheer tautology. Why did a life form survive? Because it was the fittest. And how do we know it was the fittest? Because it survived. It is after-the-fact rationalization. Any theory claiming that both rape and kindness, both genocide and generosity, are survival techniques is somewhat lacking in explanatory power. Then there is

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the not so little matter of philosophical materialism and its attendant atheism. Some Darwinists say they are only methodologically materialist and atheist, but the method is the message. In asking how the complexity of life came about, why would one begin from a philosophical premise of materialism and atheism that, on the basis of clear reason, one believes is false? Unless, of course, one believes the premise is true, in which case the premise and any possible conclusion are neatly conflated. In the name of science, a good many Darwinists have for a long time been promoting a particular philosophy, and a depressingly third-rate philosophy at that. The *Chronicle* article quotes Scott Minnich, a professor of microbiology and biochemistry at the University of Idaho: "Is it wrong to ask students to stop and think, given time and what we know of biochemistry and molecular genetics, whether blind chance and necessity can build machines that dwarf our creative ability? Is that a legitimate question? I think it is." Exactly. It's among the questions to which these pages will continue to be open. Evolutionary dogmatists and those intimidated by them can read the *New York Review of Books.*

■ The "mission statement" of the Simi Valley United Church of Christ declares: "For us the Bible is a record of faith journeys to be taken seriously but not always literally. . . . Our church seeks to be multicultural, respecting and learning from traditions which differ from our own." So much for the Bible, but aren't we great? The mission in the statement is apparently flagging, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, since two churches were merged to make up the present congregation that counts a hundred members. But the very positive note struck in the story is that the church is so "open-minded" that it has an atheist teaching Sunday school. "Stuart," says the pastor, the Rev. Bill Greene, "is a caring, bright, perceptive, inclusive kind of person who has a strong sense of justice. . . . Here is this incredibly fine man, with honesty and passion for justice, who is in our church. And that's a blessing for us, and for all our kids." Of course, Stuart denies the existence of God, but that's what inclusiveness is all about. The story is mildly, albeit sadly, amusing. What is worth remarking is that the *Los Angeles Times* thinks this is some kind of breakthrough, apparently unaware of the thousands of liberal churches across the country for whom it is a taken-for-granted assumption that Christianity proposes, not "the way, the truth, and the life," but a narrow viewpoint that must be corrected by "traditions which differ from our own." Even if that means affirming atheism. Inclusiveness is a jealous god.

■ In 1996 we published a famous—some say notorious—symposium on the judicial usurpation of politics under the deliberately interest-piquing title "The End of Democracy?" Most of the numerous critics overlooked the question mark, and charges flew hot and heavy that we were despairing of our constitutional order, advocating violent revolution, and generally indulging in dangerously reckless behavior. The fury of the debate went on for some time, much of it collected in two books by the same title and published by Spence Publishing. Now comes a very long article (169 pages) in the *Harvard Law Review* by Prof. Larry D. Kramer of New York University on, yes, the judicial usurpation of politics. Perhaps as a ticket of admission to that distinguished review, Kramer is at least as hard on conservatives, such as Justice Antonin Scalia, as he is on the many liberals who have acted over the years as though the American people are not capable of self-government. The motor force of the judicial usurpation of politics is the assumption that the people and their representatives cannot be trusted with making political decisions, and certainly not when it comes to really important questions such as what lives are and what lives are not to be protected in law (see, for the most glaring instance, *Roe v. Wade,* 1973). Kramer concludes with this: "History may not tell us what to do. But it can tell us who we were and in this way help us understand who we have become. Legend has it that, as he left the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was approached by a woman who asked him, 'What have you given us, Dr. Franklin?' 'A republic,' he replied, 'if you can keep it.' Have we? For all the disagreement about what we mean by 'republic,' no one has ever doubted that self-government is its essence and a constitution the purest distillate. What kind of republic removes its constitution from the process of self-governing? Certainly not the one our Founders gave us. Is it one we prefer? The choice, after all, is ours. The Supreme Court has made its grab for power. The question is: Will we let them get away with it?" Had he written that for our 1996 symposium, I might have asked him to tone it down just a little. After all, we don't want to be associated with incendiary publications such as the *Harvard Law Review.*

■ I share your skepticism about polls and polling. They do not even, as one pollster friend claims, give us a "snapshot" of a specific population at a specific time. If one wanted to know about, for instance, the state of Catholicism in America, I expect more pertinent truth could be derived from a really good history of the O'Reilly family in my parish than from a nationwide poll conducted by the most competent research institute. That having been said, polls are not without their uses. They can tell us what percentage of people in a specific cohort at a specific time answered what

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questions in what way. And, since polls are used and misused for all kinds of purposes, it is worth having the data at hand. So the following is just for the record. A national poll of 1,508 U.S. Catholics found that 46 percent attend Mass at least once a week, 8 percent attend Mass daily, and 11 percent said they go almost every week. Fifty-eight percent said their Catholic identity is very important and 31 percent called it somewhat important. Seventy-five percent agreed with the statement, "There is something special about being Catholic that you cannot find in other religions." Sixty-eight percent of those said they participated in the sacrament of reconciliation at least once in the last year. The results, released November 16, 2001, are the first of a planned biannual poll of contemporary. Catholic trends conducted by Zogby International in conjunction with LeMoyne College, a Jesuit school in Syracuse, New York. Those surveyed by the Zogby poll overwhelmingly agreed with a number of basic faith statements such as: "God has the power to answer prayers" (97 percent); "Jesus is both fully divine and fully human" (94 percent). Majorities agreed with church positions opposing the use of human embryos in stem-cell research (61 percent), on euthanasia and abortion (66 percent and 68 percent, respectively), and that the pope is infallible in faith and morals (64 percent). Fifty-three percent disagreed with the Church's ban on women priests, and 54 percent said they disagreed that priests must be celibate. Sixty-one percent disagreed with the church teaching against artificial birth control, and 64 percent disagreed with the prohibition on reception of communion by Catholics who have divorced and remarried without an annulment. Eighty percent of those polled said they often have felt God has taken care of them in times of need. As I say, all polling data should be taken with a shot of Old Skeptic. I expect these might serve to reinforce both the more bleak and more hopeful readings of the state of Catholicism in America. If, on the other hand, we really had the story of the four generations of the family O'Reilly. . . .

■ You may recall the piece on Father Alexander Schmemann, with the extended excerpts from his *Journals*, published by St. Vladimir Press (see "Alexander Schmemann: A Man in Full," FT, January 2001). Fr. Michael Plekon's *Living Icons*, recently published by the University of Notre Dame Press, has a chapter on Schmemann which includes this remembrance by his journalist son, Serge Schmemann. It is from an interview in the *Moscow Times*, published on the tenth anniversary of Fr. Schmemann's death. "At home Fr. Alexander never told us to 'go to church,' or that 'you must fast,' or 'do it this way,' never. Simply, he did what he had to and we found ourselves drawn to those things which were important to him. I can't say we spent as much time in church as he did, but our joy in the services came entirely from him. In our house the guiding principle of churchly life was the example of my father. My father is fasting quietly, without insisting that anyone do so, and instinctively we begin fasting as well; after all, we can't let him fast alone! It was important for him, and thus it became important for us. . . . With him everything was cozy, he was always extremely joyous. If we arose in the morning in foul spirits and saw that he was happy and energetic—with him each day began this way—then his attitude infected us all. . . He always fought against the reduction of Christianity simply to forms and rules. It, in fact, liberates man from the narrowness of forms and rules and Fr. Alexander saw in Christianity the freedom of the person and love, and in his lectures, writings, sermons, always sought to reveal the deeper meaning of all things occurring in the Church. He never oversimplified, seeing in each person the very complex arena of struggle between good and evil. . . . [H]is theology was marked above all by the element of freedom. His Christianity is that of Christ, for precisely he gave us freedom. All church rules, after all, can acquire a certain independent life of their own, totally detached from God. Fr. Alexander knew this all too well, which is why he never began from rules. For him all things begin with faith in God, which leads to an order of life, and not the other way around." Reading that, I thought, What a happy son who can thus remember his father, and what a happy father to be thus remembered.

■ The unselfconscious ethnocentricity of the *New York Times* is sometimes charming. Especially charming is Judith Shulevitz, a regular in the *Times* book review section. Writing in praise of the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, she says, "In less than a century and a half, we have turned the American Christmas into an adoration less of a divine Christ than of the quasi-divine in us—our homes, children, families, and communities." The "we" in that sentence calls to mind Tonto's well known question to the Lone Ranger. Ms. Shulevitz is all for the "spending and drinking and eating too much." "If there is such a thing as an authentic Christmas tradition it would have to be overdoing it." One gathers that devotion to Jesus the Christ, God incarnate born of the Blessed Virgin, is not very strong in the Shulevitz family. Sure enough, that turns out to be the case. "Others, like me, observe Hanukkah, a minor Jewish holiday blown wildly out of proportion to offer an alternative to our nation's irresistible winter solstice festival." No, and as Ms. Shulevitz surely knows, it is blown wildly out of

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proportion to offer Jews, and especially Jewish children, an alternative to a religious feast celebrated by all but Jews and relatively few others. She concludes, "But if dreaming of invented traditions is what we're doing, at least we're doing it together and that strikes me as the point." The point of what? The pseudo-inclusiveness of her ethnocentric "we" succeeds in trivializing both Christianity and Judaism. And that, unhappily, seems to be the point.

■ Much more to an important point is this reflection by Anne Roiphe in the *New York Observer*. "Hanukkah was once a minor holiday, a playful reminder of miracles that cast a warming light against the winter darkness. The game of dreidel was an innocent sort of gambling pleasure: an easy way to teach children that chance is beyond cajoling, that you win or lose, double or nothing, depending on the breath of the draft, the knot in the wooden floor, the unseen, the unaccounted for, the ever unpredictable. The game reveals to all that miracles may happen, but they may not, so steel your heart for disappointments. Hanukkah was not designed for its contemporary American fate. Here, it goes nose to nose, Maccabee to Jesus, against the Christmas glory. It has become a kind of echo of the Other, a comfort to the Jewish child who does not share in the red and green and tinsel of the rival holiday. This making much of Hanukkah is a wise adaptation, a bending like the willow in the wind, as a small minority fights to hold the hearts of its children in the overwhelming and most enticing surrounding culture of Santa Claus and Rudolph and the Grinch, as well as 'Silent Night' and 'Good King Wenceslas' and 'All through the house, not a creature was stirring. . . .' No matter what one does with the brave freedom fighters of old Jerusalem, they do not quite equal the pageantry of mangers and little drummer boys as God's own son is born to save the world from death. There is no contest here, because the story of Hanukkah is not the central story of Jewish belief or life, while the story of Christmas is the most basic matter of Christian belief. You could remove Hanukkah from the Jewish calendar and Judaism would barely notice. Do the same for Christmas and the entire religious structure would collapse. These holidays are simply not symmetrical. No amount of chocolate coins and electric menorahs illuminating the lobbies of Manhattan apartment buildings will make it so. Yes, they are both winter tales meant to promise the return of spring. Yes, they are both about the intervention of God in human affairs. But they are not equal, and pretending so will not wash."

■ The (London) *Daily Telegraph* has this story on Father Rodger Charles and his book *Pope's Men: The Jesuits Yesterday and Today*. Don't try to get a copy. His Jesuit superiors have forbidden him to publish it or, for that matter, anything else. I know at least four priests in religious orders who are under orders not to publish. All are respected scholars, established authors, and men of impeccable orthodoxy. It follows from the last factor that they are critical of left-liberal factions in the Church, which is why they are under the ban. I respect their obedience to authority. As Flannery O'Connor observed, we are sometimes required to suffer much more from the Church than for the Church. What cannot be respected are the publications of the left that express outrage at any official criticism of their favored authors while remaining silent about the ban imposed on those with whom they disagree. They claim to be devoted to an "open dialogue." Don't believe it.

■ According to a poll done by Zogby International, a highly respected organization, 79 percent of Muslims in this country say that U.S. foreign policy is to blame for the September 11 terrorist attacks, and 67 percent say that the best way to counter terrorism is to change U.S. policy in the Middle East. Nonetheless, 50 percent back the U.S. war against terrorism, compared with 80 to 90 percent of the general population.

■ Over the last several years, there has been increased discussion, and some little controversy, about the connections between religion and health. A recent issue of the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* includes an article by Dr. Paul S. Mueller and his colleagues that leans toward the skeptical. Covering all their bases, they conclude that any medical benefits of religion are due to "complex psychosocial-behavioral and biological processes that are incompletely understood." The same issue of the *Proceedings* carries a more confident report on a randomized controlled trial of the connections between intercessory prayer and cardiovascular disease. Then there is an editorial by Dr. Harold G. Koenig of Duke University Medical Center. He writes, "A long historical tradition connects religion, medicine, and health care. Religious groups built the first hospitals in Western civilization during the fourth century for care of the sick unable to afford private medical care. For the next thousand years until the Reformation and to a lesser extent until the French Revolution, it was the religious establishment that built hospitals, provided medical training, and licensed physicians to practice medicine. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, the scientific profession of medicine had nearly completely separated away from its religious beginnings. Likewise, the profession of nursing emerged directly from religious orders that until the early 1900s staffed the majority of hospitals both in the United States and

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other Western countries." Today, he notes, the "wall of separation" between medicine and religion seems to be collapsing. So what is a physician to do? Here is Koenig's advice: "As Mueller and colleagues point out, the research is not good enough (and may never be good enough) to justify physicians' prescribing religion to nonreligious patients. If the patient is not religious or does not want physician involvement in this area, then questioning should quickly move away from religion and toward what helps the patient cope and gives life meaning. In the majority of cases, the physician should not attempt to address complex spiritual needs of patients. However, when the patient is reluctant to talk with clergy and prefers to discuss spiritual matters with a trusted physician, taking a little extra time to listen and be supportive is usually all that is required. Providing support for religious beliefs and practices that do not conflict with medical care is appropriate. When beliefs conflict with medical care, however, it is important not to criticize the belief, but rather to listen, gather information, enter into the patient's worldview, and maintain open lines of communication, perhaps enlisting the help of the patient's clergy. Religious beliefs may have a powerful influence on the health of our patients, and we need to know about them." This new discussion is, in my judgment, all to the good. Readers of my just published *As I Lay Dying: Meditations Upon Returning* know that I am more than open to the dimensions of mystery and miracle, also in connection with medicine and health. There are also theological problems, however, in measuring the "effectiveness" of, for instance, intercessory prayer. For instance, to whom are such prayers addressed, with what urgency and submissiveness to God's will, and what is the spiritual state of those who are praying? Such questions can be multiplied. Then there is always the temptation of a purely utilitarian approach to religion, and to prayer in particular, not to mention the dangers in "putting God to the test." But it is, all in all, a good thing that medicine is increasingly opening itself to dimensions of reality that cannot be contained within a philosophy of scientific materialism. A very good thing.

■ That gimlet-eyed law professor, Ronald Rychlak of the University of Mississippi, picks up on what he takes to be my implication ("The American Mind," FT, December 2001) that among Thomas Jefferson's dubious contributions was the introduction of the government-sponsored lottery. The gambling industry—or, as they prefer, the gaming industry—is one of Rychlak's specialties, and he notes that lotteries go back to the early eighteenth century. He writes, "Governor John Hancock opposed them, arguing that they were calculated to trap the unwary into the vice of gambling. The *Old Farmer's Almanack* took a similar approach, arguing that lotteries were the 'path [which] leads down to the gloomy pits of ruin.' However, when Harvard needed a lottery to raise funds, Massachusetts authorized it." As for Jefferson, he did need to sell his property to pay off debts and offered this defense of the lottery: "An article of property, insusceptible of division at all, or not without great diminution of its worth, is sometimes so large a value as that no purchaser can be found while the owner owes debts, has no other means of payment, and his creditors no chance of obtaining it but by its sale at a full and fair price. The lottery is here a salutary instrument for disposing of it, where men run small risks for the chance of obtaining a high prize." As I noted, the states dragged their feet in authorizing the lottery until after Jefferson died, and it failed of its purpose, leaving his daughter in poverty until, in tribute to her father, two states provided her a pension. I'm with the *Old Farmer's Almanack* when it comes to state-sponsored lotteries, but will make it clear in the future that we should not blame Jefferson for starting them.

■ In March 1998, the Vatican released *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, a document that has occasioned considerable controversy. It is the stated purpose of David I. Kertzer to refute the document in his book, *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism* (see FT review, February). Writing in the *Journal of the Historical Society*, Professor Russell Hittinger of the University of Tulsa examines Kertzer's scholarship and finds it gravely deficient. Kertzer says he intends to "stick as close to the popes as I can get. . . . If I fail to bring their worldview to life, I will have failed to fully accomplish my task." First off, Hittinger notes, Kertzer shows no familiarity with the writings of the popes in question, not even with their most public documents. Between 1775 and 1939, the period under discussion, ten popes issued some 277 encyclicals and other teaching documents, with at least 158 dealing with issues of political and social order. "Remarkably," writes Hittinger, "there is no indication that Kertzer has laid eyes on any of these documents." Kertzer does quote the 1937 encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, to complain that it contains "no direct attack on anti-Semitism." In fact, the encyclical's attack on Nazism asserts that Scripture and the Incarnation itself forbid any racial derogation of the "chosen people." Nobody at the time had any trouble understanding who was meant by the "chosen people." More remarkable yet, Kertzer's notes show that the six words he quotes from the encyclical are lifted from John Cornwell's thoroughly discredited screed, *Hitler's Pope*. This is historical scholarship? Hittinger: "Since his judgments are scurrilous, one

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must wonder whether his publisher looked at the notes carefully enough to detect that Kertzer relies on second and third hand material." And there are major historical developments of which Kertzer seems to be sublimely ignorant. "Kertzer also completely overlooks what is surely the most important and interesting right-wing movement in the Catholic world at the time, Charles Maurras' *Action française.* Founded in 1899 during the Dreyfus affair, *Action française* represents better than any other movement the passage of the monarchical party to the ideology of extreme nationalism. Maurras distinguished between the legal nation (*pays légal*) and the authentic nation (*pays réel*). For Maurras, the authentic nation must be recovered from the Protestants, revolutionaries, freemasons, and Jews who control the legal nation. Pius X accused the movement of 'hatred.' In 1914 seven of Maurras' publications were put on the Index. His supporters were excommunicated by Pius XI in 1927, and the Jesuit Cardinal Billot was forced to resign because of his support for the movement. The history of *Action française* can help us understand just how the older Christian nativism had become colored with secularism and nationalism. Some of the most important Catholic thinkers of the twentieth century—Charles Péguy and Jacques Maritain, to name but two—were formed in the crucible of this dispute. Indeed, its effect can be detected in many of Pius XI's encyclicals. What is certain, however, is that there can be no credible history of papal ideas about the political right wing without careful study of this movement and Rome's thirty-year effort to stifle it. It is certainly necessary for someone like Kertzer, who is in search of incriminating ideas, and who asserts, without evidence or citation, that for the Vatican Fascist regimes were 'embraced as a God-given bulwark against the great socialist evil.' Instead of the public documents and history, Kertzer purports to give a 'secret' history consisting of diplomatic cables, private audiences with popes, and form letters from papal secretaries conveying papal benedictions to priests and laymen who had an anti-Semitic agenda. From these, Kertzer does not merely charge that the popes were not doing enough to resist and correct anti-Semitism in countries like France and Austria (not to mention the anti-Semitism expressed in ecclesiastical newspapers sponsored by the Vatican); he also implies that popes supported or found nothing untoward in these developments. Throughout the book, the popes are depicted as omniscient and omnipotent figures, capable of putting Austria and France, the Roman Curia, bishops, monsignors, and journalists into line by a snap of a papal finger; their silence about a particular renegade priest or political movement is interpreted as another instance of papal causality in world affairs." In sum, Hittinger writes, "*The Popes Against the Jews* pursues an important subject—in recent literature, one that has been obscured by artless polemic. Whatever might be the author's sincerity (there can be no doubt about his moral passion), this work does not rise to the level of history. He has no control over the meta-historical criteria to which the data are supposed to conform. His research into the material data is slipshod, his inferences are rarely sound, and often drawn irresponsibly. The book does not throw light on a history already obscured by legend and witch hunt."

■ I corresponded with Oscar Cullmann but never met him personally. As was the case with most theology students of the last half century, he had a great influence on my thinking. His New Testament studies on the meaning of time and the nature of the State were especially formative back when the school of thought dubbed "biblical theology" was riding high. Like that other Swiss Protestant Karl Barth, Cullmann did pioneering work in the rapprochement with Catholics following Vatican Council II. Ted Dorman, author of *The Hermeneutics of Oscar Cullmann* and professor of Bible and theology at Taylor University in Indiana, brings to my attention that February 25 is the hundredth anniversary of Cullmann's birth. (He died in 1999.) This May the *Fondation Oecumenique Oscar Cullmann* is holding at the University of Basel an international conference to mark the centennial. Prof. Dorman also suggests that a revival of "biblical theology"—based on "the unity of the Bible" and "salvation history" (*Heilsgeschichte*)—may be underway. He writes, "Somewhere, I believe, Cullmann must be pleased." We will find out when, pray God, we meet up again in that Somewhere.

■ Andrew Sullivan has been going on again about what's wrong with conservatism, its chief fault being that it refuses to conform to Andrew Sullivan's definition of conservatism. Writing in the *New Republic,* he is again exercised by the "theocons" (including, as usual, your scribe) who don't understand "the separation of church and state" and are in their motivation, if not their policy prescriptions, very much like the Taliban of Afghanistan. I think Jonah Goldberg of *National Review* got Mr. Sullivan's number. "In a nutshell, this is my problem with Andrew Sullivan's conservatism. He's a brilliant and charming guy. But he seems to reject or critique all forms of conservatism that don't dovetail with his own personal priorities. I'm not referring solely, or even primarily, to his homosexuality or advocacy of gay rights. From what I can tell, Sullivan's conservatism is informed not just by his sexuality but

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by his Catholicism, his blue-collar British roots, his serious hang-ups about British authoritarian culture, and—not least—by the fact that he's a follower of the British philosopher Michael Oakeshott (if I were smarter and more patient, I think I'd be an Oakeshottian too) and a protégé of the classical conservative Harvey Mansfield. Moreover, Sullivan's conservatism isn't just informed by these things, it's informed by the perhaps insurmountable contradictions between these things. These sometimes competing, sometimes complementary impulses make Sullivan a joy to read (and talk to). But the extrapolation of one's personal beliefs—or, more accurately, one's personality—to a broad universal philosophy is at minimum a form of arrogance, and at maximum a recipe for disaster." Goldberg is among the most artful ramblers in the business, and somehow he gets from Sullivan to what he calls our "Chinese-menu culture." Cultural liberalism is a big enough problem, Goldberg says, but liberals mainly cultivate cultural perversities as entertainment; they take every measure to make sure that their own children turn out to be successful in pretty conventional ways of defining success. Cultural libertarians are much more worrying. Goldberg has in mind the father of John Walker, who said he was glad that his son had found something to believe in, even if it was fighting with the Taliban against his country. So what is cultural libertarianism? Let Jonah Goldberg answer that: "Cultural libertarianism basically says that whatever ideology, religion, cult, belief, creed, fad, hobby, or personal fantasy you like is just fine so long as you don't impose it on anybody else, especially with the government. You want to be a Klingon? Great! Attend the Church of Satan? Hey man, if that does it for ya, go for it. You want to be a 'Buddhist for Jesus'? Sure, mix and match, man; we don't care. Hell, you can even be an observant Jew, a devout Catholic or a faithful Baptist, or a lifelong heroin addict—they're all the same, in the eyes of a cultural libertarian. Just remember: keep it to yourself if you can. Don't claim that being a Lutheran is any better than being a member of the Hale-Bopp cult, and never use the government to advance your view. If you can do that, then—whatever floats your boat."

■ The Congress still dithers over a ban on human cloning, despite the fact that there is a growing scientific consensus that embryonic stem cells—whether cloned or not—are not necessary for research. Equal and better results are obtained from stem cells obtained from umbilical cords, bone marrow, and even adult fat cells. J. Bottum writes in Canada's *National Post* that the only thing human cloning is likely to produce in the short run is cloned human beings—just as the only medical advance animal cloning has produced in the four years since Dolly is the ability to create cloned animals. Mary Shelley, Aldous Huxley, Robert Louis Stevenson, and H. G. Wells, says Bottum, anticipated what is happening now. "Most European countries have already passed laws banning so-called reproductive cloning while allowing what they call therapeutic cloning. These laws will prove pointless. We will be unable to maintain a situation in which scientists are encouraged to create cloned embryos and then barred from the end toward which their creations naturally aim: the insertion of those embryos into a womb and the live birth of a human clone. Besides, such laws are unethical on their face, since they attempt to define a class of embryos that it is illegal *not* to destroy. Even more to the point, they are unenforceable, since only court-ordered abortions could eliminate the result of violating them. A ban solely on reproductive cloning is simply a license for scientists to get their techniques right until the pressure to bring a clone to birth becomes overwhelming. At that point, our problems really begin—from the extraordinarily high rate of deformity among clones, to the end of the family in the confusion of reproducing oneself as one's own child, to the likely psychological damage for the person created by cloning. Along the way, we will have moved from the begetting of our children to the manufacture of our descendants and changed forever what it means to be human. Shouldn't we try to stop this? I worry about people who reach into the stuff of life and twist it to their will. I worry about the people who act simply because they can. If they lived in crumbling castles—their hair standing up on end and their voices howling in maniacal laughter—we'd know them for mad scientists. But they wear nice white lab coats, and their chief executive brings his pleasant face on television to reassure us they are really acting for the best of medical motives, and, besides, there is a great deal of money to be made in biotech and pharmaceutical stocks. And so Victor Frankenstein's chamber begins to seem merely a modern laboratory. The Brave New World, merely a green and pleasant land. Dr. Jekyll's dark study, merely a clean, well-lighted place. The island of Dr. Moreau, merely a health resort. But in their precincts, nothing human can survive."

■ Members of the Jewish Defense League in Los Angeles were arrested for planning to issue a "wake up call" by blowing up a local mosque. The consistently, if caustically, on-target James Taranto of the *Wall Street Journal* remarks: "Watch for the root-cause crowd to come forward with the usual explanations: the poverty and oppression under which L.A. Jews live makes this sort of thing understandable, if not inevitable; they did

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it as a protest against U.S. foreign policy; their alleged targets need to ask themselves: Why do they hate us?"

■ Ah, for the resistance movements of our youth! The very "progressive" city council of Berkeley, California, voted that the city's general information phone answerers should supply material about the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors. The Associated Press reports, "The idea is to have information available so staff can refer anyone who calls asking about how to avoid military combat." The council defeated an amendment that would also make available information about military recruitment. Berkeley's refugees from radicalisms past apparently have not been told that the draft expired decades ago. The advice to those with conscientious objections to enlisting is very simple: don't enlist.

■ *Christianity Today* takes note of the dueling headlines of stories reporting on John Paul II's World Day of Peace message:

Pope: Anti-terror fight is moral (Associated Press)
Pope, not mentioning U.S., urges military restraint (*New York Times*)
Pope says forgiveness leads to peace (*Chicago Tribune*)
Pope ambiguous on U.S. campaign (*Los Angeles Times*)
Blunt force wrong, pontiff says (*[Toronto] Globe and Mail*)
Pope calls for an end to Iraqi sanctions (CNN)
Plight of innocents worries pontiff (Reuters/*Toronto Star*)

Actually, the Pope said that terrorism must be unequivocally condemned, that military action against terrorism is justified, that such action should be discriminate and proportionate, and that whatever measure of justice is achieved must be secured by forgiveness if there is to be lasting peace. Now you might want to try writing your own headline.

■ The late Erwin Glikes, legendary founder of the Free Press, wanted me to do a book with his house. I mentioned another publisher who had made a generous offer. "They *print* books," Erwin snorted, "We *publish* books." By that he meant that, for Free Press, each book was viewed as a special project, given personal editorial attention, and assigned to someone whose job depended upon helping it to find its readership. For reasons that I forget, I did not do that book with Free Press, but I have remembered Erwin's words about the difference between printing and publishing books. In addition to publishing *As I Lay Dying*, Basic Books has done a fine job in another and commonly neglected aspect of the book business, book designing. It is a physically beautiful book. Of course, I wouldn't expect you to buy the book just because it is good looking. (Although in this instance it is at least partly true that you can tell a book by its cover.) I do think you might be interested in the story it tells, a story that I told in part in "Born Toward Dying" (FT, February 2000). It is a very personal, and sometimes painful, story about cancer, about friendship in times of illness, about lingering at death's door and, to my considerable surprise, discovering why I was not afraid. *As I Lay Dying: Meditations upon Returning.* It is just out and should be in your bookstore now. I very much hope you will like it, and will tell all your friends about it.

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Sources: On ethicists for sale, *Christianity Today*, October 1, 2001; *U.S. News & World Report*, July 30, 2001; ZENIT, August 8, 2001. On *Dominus Iesus*, *Ecumenical Trends*, December 2001. On Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*, December 15, 2001.

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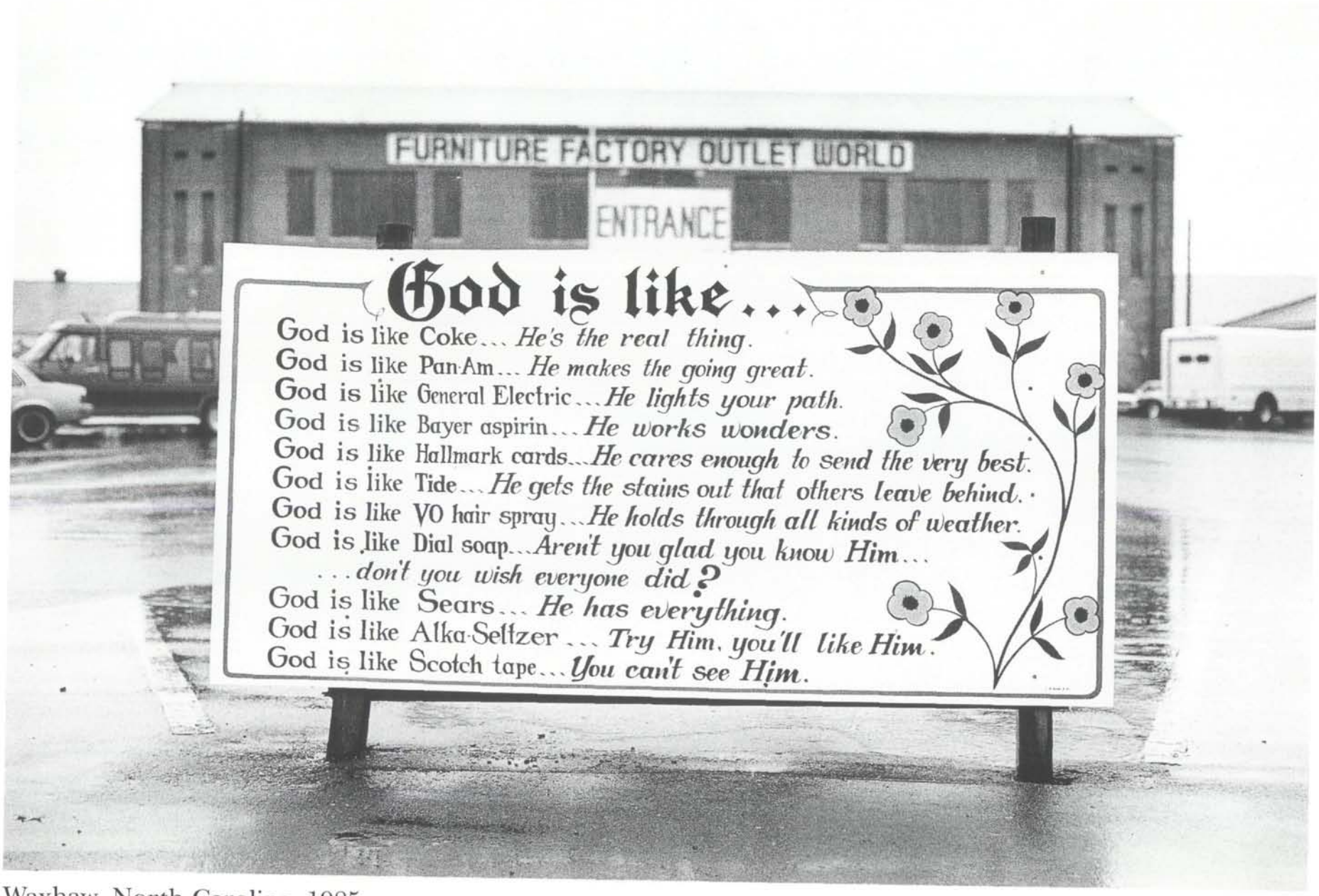
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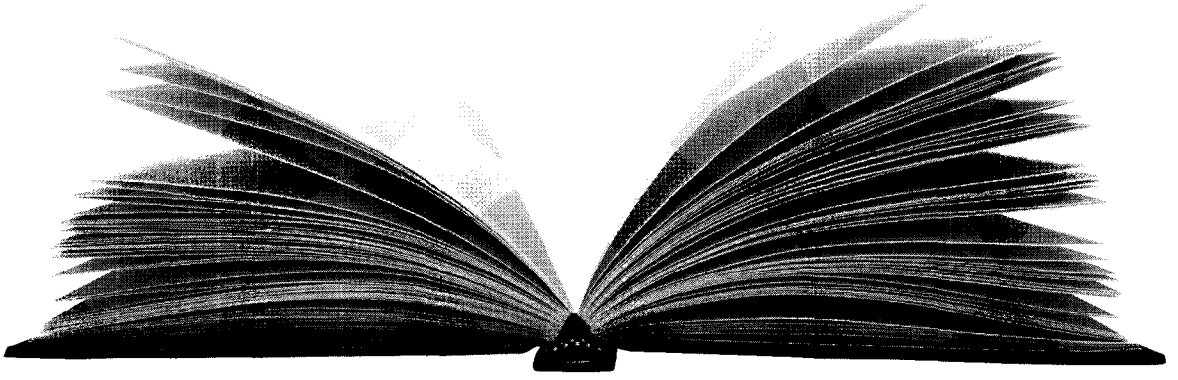

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